

Opinion

— EDITORIAL —

The good, the pretty bad, & the really ugly

The Good. This week the Baker City Police Department and Baker County Narcotics Enforcement Team made multiple arrests, taking known drug dealers—meth dealers—off the streets.

Now, we realize those arrested are innocent until proven guilty.

We also realize the reality is most residents of Baker County either know someone who is dealing, using, has used or has dealt.

In most neighborhoods, the residents can point a finger down the street straight at that one house from which they know drugs are coming and going. We'd say meth has become an epidemic in our area, no exaggeration.

When a meth user starts using, it can be for a myriad of reasons—immaturity, poor judgement, ignorance, peer pressure, mental health issues—but once started for any reason, they're hooked.

We have spoken with former meth addicts, and they will describe their old lifestyle as a living hell. Other crimes such as theft increase around them, and they may find themselves participating to pay for their addiction. They lose children. Their children are emotionally scarred. They lose jobs. They lose their self-respect. When they want to seek help, they often can't—at least not without great difficulty—out of fear of retaliation from the dealer and his/her network of thugs, and by the constant pushing of the substance onto a person whose choices are already significantly impaired.

Dealers are doing the devil's work, no doubt about it.

So when we see the multitude of arrests over the last year, and the effort undertaken to quietly, methodically complete these sting operations, we

cheer.

Around this same time, yet another alleged Baker City meth dealer was arrested in Wheeler County.

The last press release we received said that more arrests are anticipated. We look forward to it.

The Pretty Bad. President Obama's State of the Union address.

If ever a sitting president appeared to happily sit cocooned in his own little imaginary land, it would be this one.

This year's SOTU address sounded much like former campaign speeches during which Obama talked about how great he'd done and how much better America is doing because of it. In spite of a clear mandate as demonstrated by the November election, he took the opportunity to decry Republicans. He cracked jokes in the face of an \$18 trillion debt. He failed to mention the current war against extremist Muslim terrorists currently happening all over the globe. And of course he was focused on all the "free" stuff he wants to give the underprivileged. Read: He focused on how much he could pilfer from those who work their bottoms off to make an honest living. In essence, he spewed the core tenant of liberalism once again.

The Really Ugly. Two words: Michael Moore.

Here is a man who gives new meaning to the word "hypocrite."

Moore has made millions making documentaries bashing businesses and executives who have made millions.

Now he's speaking out against military snipers who risk their lives to protect the soldiers who risk their lives to give Moore the right to speak out in the first place. (Whew!)

Then, when pounced on by mainstream America and fellow Hollywoodites (Dean Cain, Rob Lowe, Blake Shelton ...) about his multitude of anti-sniper tweets, which essentially called Chris Kyle a coward, he carefully backtracked and said he hadn't referred to Chris Kyle or the movie "American Sniper" directly. As if indirect inferences make his tweets more acceptable. He then went on to say lovely things about the acting and production of the movie.

We'd like to see Mr. Moore dropped down into the middle of an ISIS camp—or even in the middle of the training regimen our Navy SEALs endure—and see who's the coward then.

—The Baker County Press Editorial Board

— LETTERS TO THE EDITOR —

Earth's resources are essential

To the Editor:

Access and use of the land are perhaps the most important problems facing America today. The problem is that so few people recognize the problem and how it relates to them, particularly those who live in metropolitan areas.

I say most important because no industry, no business, and no jobs can continue without the produce and resources that are recovered from the Earth.

Another fact that few are aware of is that all new wealth comes from the ground. There is no other source. It is created when farmers, ranchers, and fishermen harvest the food and fibers in their crops and timber men, miners and oil men recover our vital resources. This wealth is expanded when we process and manufacture more useful products from these resources.

All others share this wealth by distributing the products or by providing a service for one another. Thus, the basic industries are the foundation of our entire economy.

Our county has serious economic problems and needs more jobs and money.

The problem is that agencies that have

been charged with administering our lands, the BLM, USFS, EPA, etc., have been so carried away with issuing a never-ending series of regulations and restricting access and use of the land, often disregarding Congressional Law and decisions of the highest courts in the land, that they are destroying the very industries that supply the wealth and resources that support our country.

They have been so carried away by environmental policies and their slogan "Save the Earth" that they have forgotten the basic fact of life—that no life on Earth can survive unless we harvest the food and resources of the Earth.

It is a noble thing to save a few special places for the future, but you can't have them all.

The same forces that uplifted our beautiful mountains brought the minerals to the surface and change the climate to make timber growth productive.

Unless we reassess our access and use of the land policies, we face economic breakdown, and your job and all environmental concerns will go out the window.

Ken Anderson
Baker City

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— GUEST OPINION —

New ODFW director must give new direction

By Ty Stubblefield

The management of Oregon's fish and wildlife has never been in a more compromising position than it is today. ODFW faces a \$32 million budget shortfall. Plagued with depressed deer and elk numbers and increasing predator populations, coupled with a decline in hunter numbers, it seems the plight couldn't get much worse. That's unless you consider the severe decline in managed habitat on much of the state's federally managed lands, over which ODFW has no control. Now the agency is looking for a new leader to right this listing ship.

Then add pressure from non-hunting groups who recently wrote a letter to the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission and the Governor asking that the new director reform the agency to be less dependent on license and tag dollars and be more "conservation minded."

Excuse us?

Hunting and fishing have been the funding source of conservation since the 1930s. In fact, of ODFW's 2013-15 projected revenues, \$131.9 million comes from Pittman-Robertson funds (a federal excise tax on firearms, ammunition, archery equipment and firearm-related accessories). Another \$103.8 million of the agency's budget comes from license and tag fees. That's \$235.7 million of ODFW's budget—the vast majority—derived from hunter and angler dollars. Hunters and anglers are on the forefront of wildlife conservation. Success stories abound, including the return of elk herds in the early 1930s, reintroduction of mountain goats in the 1950s, and reintroduction of California bighorn sheep in the 1950s and Rocky Mountain bighorns in the 1970s. These efforts were all funded by sportsmen.

The real question is: what should we expect of the new director? First and foremost, the new director should be a true hunter and fisherman. His or her focus should be fish and wildlife, not politics and people. Too often politics steer the management of the department rather than sound science.

The director should also manage the agency within its budgetary means, but that doesn't have to be the Herculean task it's often made to resemble. Taking seriously ODFW's mandate to optimize wildlife populations will also address the need to optimize the agency's revenue. Build better deer



Submitted Photo

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and elk herds, and hunters will beat a path to the point of sale machines. Conversely, if hunters are unsuccessful year after year, eventually they will find somewhere else to devote their time and money. The downward trend in hunting license and tag sales that parallels the decline in deer and elk numbers leaves little doubt.

A serious look at predator population control is a key part of the simple equation: more unmanaged predators prowling the landscape = fewer deer and elk available to hunters = fewer license and tag dollars.

ODFW has a choice to make: restore our big game resources and reestablish the department's traditional funding base, or become a non-game wildlife agency with a skeleton staff dependent on elusive and unpredictable general funds. Which choice will the agency make? Its new director will exert considerable influence on that decision, and that's why OHA will work diligently to ensure the new director embraces a hunter's vision of conservation.

Fiscal Facts

- 1961: 670,000 hunting and angling licenses sold. Game Commission operated on \$7.5 million biennial budget. Fish Commission operated on \$5 million biennial budget.

- 1975: 766,000 anglers and 390,000 hunters contributed to a biennial budget of \$40 million, of which 50 percent was provided from user fees, 33 percent by the federal government, and 17 percent from the state general fund.

- 2013: 269,000 licensed hunters and 617,000 licensed anglers. Projected revenues are \$361.2 million: 36 percent federal funds (Pittman-Robertson), 29 percent from license fees, 5 percent from the general fund, and the balance from other sources.

The Oregon Hunters Association (oregonhunters.org) is the state's largest Oregon-based pro-hunting organization, with 10,000 members and 27 chapters statewide. Its mission is "to provide abundant huntable wildlife resources in Oregon for present and future generations, enhancement of wildlife habitat and protection of hunters rights."

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