

Outdoor Rec / Sports

What lies beneath the winter snow



THE OUTDOOR COLUMN
By Todd Arriola

It appears Mother Nature enjoys teasing us constantly with her twisted game of “Guess What Season It Is?” allowing us to bask in the warmth and sunshine on certain days, showing promise of spring, and with that display, showcasing periodically what has remained hidden under beautiful, sparkly, white blankets of snow: trash.

Winter seems to somehow grant us all an extremely convenient reason to wait until it’s basically over with in order to begin the process of cleaning up what should have been cleaned up before it basically began.

It seems much more appealing to expend energy figuring out clever ways of fattening up and hibernating indoors, or, spending the least amount of time humanly possible outdoors, than it does to pick up trash in the snow, wind and cold.

It’s easy to see signs of human

presence, even in the most peculiar areas, courtesy of the inexplicable amount of trash left behind.

I once stumbled onto the remains of what must have been one wild party in the Dooley Mountain area, complete with 40-ounce empty bottles of beer, but, I felt overwhelmed with picking anything up, as I don’t usually carry a box of contractor-size trash bags with me.

A significant amount of beer cans has been observed “deposited” throughout the County, even in the less remote, more urban locales, but this can’t be solely attributed to one group or another (you didn’t really think I’d just blame this on hikers or teenagers, did you?)

Admittedly, we Oregonians play the west-side/east-side blame game too often, but we all use nature for hiking, hunting, fishing, camping, and, many other activities, so it makes sense that we all can participate in the cleanup when possible.

This doesn’t require a crime scene investigation to determine who’s responsible for throwing out the bag of fast food—it requires some time and some exercise, or the consideration to avoid throwing it out in the first place.

Each year, the Powder Basin Watershed Council (PBWC) usually rallies the troops (volunteers) in the spring and fall to clean up portions of the Powder River, which is by no means void of signs of trash.

This trash, most of it human-caused, can also be, partially at least,

hidden in the winter, and, the river can carry tons of it.

Last fall, the volunteers cleaned up a significant amount of it, and replanted vandalized trees and shrubs, but, sadly, the vandalism occurred once again. Humans aren’t perfect, but, it takes a special kind of callousness to commit that offense twice in the same place, destroying the efforts of student volunteers.

Frankly, there are a heck of a lot of places in the City, too, in need of some cleansing, a fact that seems to be showcased when spring arrives.

Along Campbell Street, for example, at least one particular residence has resembled a stand-in landfill/junkyard for years, which is an amazing feat, considering its location, and, the City’s tendency to promptly remind anyone with weeds or grass at an unacceptable height that it’s time to dust the cobwebs off, and gas up, their lawnmower or brush cutter.

This is understandable, since the City has standards, even for the significant amount of neglected properties, many of which would see more improvement and less financial woes with demolition than with remodeling, as my father might suggest.

I enjoy walking along some dirt road, trail or even City street, sans trash that belongs in the nearest garbage can, or landfill, but I also know that we’re all human, and most of us are guilty of depositing or leaving trash where we know it shouldn’t really be at one point or another, whether out of laziness, convenience, or maybe just plain indifference...

So I was thinking ... The American sports fan

By Jimmy Ingram
Special to
The Baker County Press

Sports are an integral part of American life.

Ask anyone what sports team they follow and they’re bound to express their undying allegiance to one, two or multiple sports teams.

But fans come on many different levels, some casual and some dedicated almost beyond reason....

(Level 1) Fair Weather Fan: Fair weather fans are the ire of truly dedicated sports fans.

They set out each year in search of whichever team is at the top of the standings.

Their biggest challenge as a fan is coming up with enough money annually to buy new gear from whichever front runner they’ve latched onto.

They’ve never experienced a losing season and like to brag about how much better their team is than yours.

They’re often heard using the phrase, “Been with the team since day one.” Universally annoying, fair-weather fans lack any credibility whatsoever in the world of sports.

(Level 2) Casual fan: Casual fans are fairly low key about their sports teams.

They may own a team hat or a shirt and watch one or two games a year.

They have a general knowledge of the team and may be able to name a player or two, but typically avoid any conversation that will give away their lack of true interest in the team.

When cornered with discussion they will usually disclose they “have been busy and haven’t really been paying much attention to the games.”

(Level 3) Semi-dedicated fans: These fans would be bronze medal

winner if sports fandom was an Olympic event.

They are fairly knowledgeable about the team, coach, players, and have a mild appreciation for strategy and what can be done to improve the team. They usually have enough gear to don a complete outfit dedicated to the team and do their best to catch 50% or more of the season.

Their dedication is a noble effort, but they’re able to be distracted from games by smaller events like work parties, weekend yard work, and fishing trips.

Semi-dedicated fans can be heard saying things like “this year’s team looks better than last year’s,” or, “I really wish we had a better defense.”

(Level 4) Dedicated sports fan: These fans know what’s going on. They can tell you about what each player on the team has to offer, freely criticize the coach’s decision making, and offer viable solutions for what upper management needs to do to make the team better.

They normally have a wide array of team gear dating back several decades and can give you a fairly accurate and emotional description of the season when the team nearly “won it all.”

Dedicated fans typically watch every game, understand point spreads and statistics, and have a habit of yelling loudly at their TV screens when things go wrong for their team during a game.

They likely have a team sticker on their vehicle and can be heard uttering phrases like, “Why the hell would Mark Helfrich have Lockie under center when Vernon Adams completed 80% of his passes last week?”

(Level 5) Half-crazy Superfan: Superfans are to sports teams what Van Gogh was to the world of art: they’re incredible at what they do and completely insane.

They not only know every team and player statistic past and present, but can likely tell you each player’s favorite movie, aftershave, and life story.

They attend multiple games in person each year and watch the rest on tv in a dark, locked room eliminating the possibility of any outside force that may distract them from the game or bring bad luck to the team.

Things like weddings, child birth, work, and self hygiene have likely been ignored at some point in their years as a fan, either for the sake of watching a game, or as a result of



Submitted Photo

Jimmy Ingram is a local farmer and father of two who enjoys people watching within our wonderful community and beyond.

moping after a devastating loss.

If you ask a Superfan about a year or a period of their life they probably won’t bring up things like the year they were married or the year they bought their house.

Chances are, you’ll hear about the team’s win-loss record that year, the mistakes they made in the playoffs, and conspiracy theories about referee or umpire bias against their teams.

Approximately 75% of the Superfan wardrobe has the team logo, and they have 2-3 stickers covering every square foot of glass on their vehicle.

Team flags hang at all times from their home, automobile, RV, and are spontaneously hung from unsuspecting rival fan’s belongings strictly out of spite.

To the Superfan, conversations with less knowledgeable fans are considered fruitless endeavors; there isn’t anything they can be told about the team they don’t already know.

They aren’t egotistical or mean, just way too focused to deal with team analysis by amateur fans.

They’ve sat through impossible victories, heartbreaking losses, a dozen coaches, hundreds if not thousands of players, and season after season after season. They’re not just a fan. They are THE fan.

So which type of sports fan are you?

There really is no wrong answer, unless of course you say “I don’t really watch sports.”

This is America, and that would be ridiculous.

Now go support your team, whoever that may be.

Look for the next *So I was Thinking* the first Friday in February!

Bighorn sheep capture continues restoration efforts

SALEM, Ore.—Bighorn sheep capture and transplant operations this week in eastern Oregon are continuing decades-long efforts to restore this rare native animal to its historic range.

Since the first California bighorn sheep were brought from Williams Lake, BC, Canada in the 1954, the population has grown to 3,500-3,700 among herds in southeast Oregon. Northeast Oregon’s Rocky Mountain sheep have grown to about 800 since the first successful transplant of 40 animals from Jasper National Park, Canada in 1971.

ODFW’s yearly capture and transplant operations help thin too-large herds, supplement herds that need more numbers and increase genetic diversity. This year, efforts focused on reducing the size of the I-84 herd. A total of 26 animals from the herd were relocated to the Diablo Mountain and Coglan Buttes herds in Lake County.

ODFW also captured 7 Rocky Mountain sheep in the Lookout Mountain Unit and transported them to Washington State as part of the Hells Canyon Initiative, a joint effort by state and federal agencies and sportsman groups to restore bighorn sheep in the area.

During the capture operations this week, a helicopter was used to locate sheep before they were captured using a net fired out of the helicopter from a specially-designed gun. Once captured, the sheep were blindfolded and restrained to calm them, then hoisted in the air by the helicopter and taken to a location where ODFW biologists and veterinarians processed the animals. Each bighorn sheep was disease-tested and many were fitted with a GPS transmitter so their movements can be tracked. Volunteers from the Oregon Foundation for North American Wild Sheep (Oregon FNAWS) also assisted in the operation.

Disease concerns for wild sheep: 2016 Owyhee hunts cancelled

After completing the I-84 sheep capture operation, ODFW moved to southeast Oregon to disease test and collar nearly 60 sheep in Whitehorse Unit. ODFW will be stepping up surveys and disease sampling in herds in Oregon’s southeast corner (Whitehorse and Owyhee Units) due to disease concerns.

A strain of pneumonia from a previous outbreak in Nevada’s wild sheep is now affecting wild sheep in the Whitehorse Unit. Testing of sheep in the Rattlesnake and 10-mile area of the Whitehorse Unit has confirmed the strain is one that led to a loss of sheep in Nevada’s Santa Rosa Mountains in 2003-04. “These bacteria can persist in sheep populations over long periods of time, even decades, and move long distances and across state boundaries,” said Dr. Colin Gillin, ODFW wildlife veterinarian.

The Owyhee Unit is experiencing a more current disease outbreak after a new strain of Mycoplasma ovipneumonia (M.ovi), the respiratory pathogen that can cause pneumonia, was detected in this herd in late 2015. ODFW’s mid-December 2015 helicopter surveys detected 50-60 percent fewer sheep in the Owyhee unit than in March 2015. Samples testing positive for the pathogen have come from hunter-harvested sheep on both sides of the Owyhee Canyon (from Leslie Gulch to Hole in the Ground, a distance of 37 river miles). Further monitoring will help determine the extent of the outbreak and whether the disease has run its course or if more sheep are getting sick or dying.

“Our biggest concerns at this point is the level of infection, how prevalent the bacteria is in our herds, and whether we can devise a management strategy to mitigate the effects of a pneumonia outbreak,” said Gillin.

Due to the outbreak and concern that hunting opportunity could be poor, ODFW is cancelling bighorn sheep hunting in the Owyhee Unit for 2016. In recent years, the unit has been offering 10 bighorn sheep tags spread across three hunts.

Any hunter who has already applied for this hunt as a first choice may cancel the application for a refund, make their second choice sheep hunt their first choice, or change their application. See page 14 of the Oregon Big Game Regulations for details or call ODFW Licensing at (503) 947-6101.

Disease was one of the factors behind bighorn sheep’s extirpation in the 1940s, along with unregulated hunting. But sport hunters have since been instrumental in restoring bighorn sheep in Oregon. ODFW’s annual auction and raffle of special bighorn sheep tags have generated thousands of dollars for their management and for research here in Oregon. Groups like Oregon FNAWS have also contributed money and time.

Bighorn sheep are one of the rarest game mammals in Oregon today. Less than 100 bighorn sheep tags were offered to hunters last year on a “once-in-a-lifetime” hunt basis. ODFW also auctions and raffles off a bighorn sheep tag each year at events sponsored by sportsmen conservation groups; proceeds from the sales benefit the management of bighorn sheep.

Swim results

Riana Scott (13) attended the 2016 Washington Open swim meet on January 14-17 in Federal Way, WA. This meet required qualifying times to enter and was highly competitive. There were 999 athletes representing 76 teams from the Western states and British Columbia.

Riana achieved personal best times most of her events and the following are her results:

Women’s 200 IM 2:17.25 70th
Women’s 50 free 26.48 116th
Women’s 200 free 2:02.23 88th
Women’s 100 Breast 1:12.17 73rd
Women’s 100 Back 1:06.43 166th
Women’s 100 free 56.87 118th
Women’s 200 Breast 2:34.14 43rd