

Quick takes

New laws start Jan. 1

And the governor y'all elected wants to cut our drug task force and crime lab over here. So explain that one.

— Tony Covlin

Hurrah for the whistleblower laws. Harder for those corrupt state managers to destroy evidence of their behavior.

— Patience Searle

The majority of poachers in Oregon are people trying to put food on the table. Try passing laws that matter.

— Ian Van Gelder

Elk herd drown in icy lake

Hate to think of those poor things drowning and suffering. Sad.

— Helen Morrison

Mother Nature can be beautiful and a beast.

— Adreanna Dugan

Christmas fire strikes home

We get more house fires because a lot of houses in this town are far from up to code, in the electrical department especially.

— Timothy Coggins

How sad. Glad everyone is ok.

—Malia Keene-Johnston

One of the great lessons of the Twitter age is that much can be summed up in just a few words. Here are some of this week's takes. Tweet yours @Tim_Trainor or email editor@eastoregonian.com, and keep them to 140 characters.

There once was a man not named Ishi

By JOSEPH BELLI
Writers on the Range

One hundred years ago, an iconic Native American died. We do not remember him as a tribal leader, holy man or an activist. His biggest accomplishment was simply enduring.

We know him by the name "Ishi," because if he had a name for himself, we never learned it. When he wandered down from his homeland in the California foothills of Mount Lassen and was found huddled in a corral near the town of Oroville, he entered history. His people, the Yahi, had supposedly vanished decades earlier, and because they were the last Natives living freely in the West, Ishi became famous as "the last wild Indian."

Anthropologists at the University of California arranged to have him placed under their supervision, and he spent the remainder of his life in San Francisco. They called him Ishi, a Yahi word for "man," because in Yahi culture personal names were private, not to be uttered casually.

Ishi adjusted surprisingly well to urban society. He was employed as a custodian, rode trolleys, saw airplanes, witnessed surgeries and relished ice cream. But there were darker elements to his story. His "home" was actually a museum, and he was, for a time, put on display. New to modern life, he soon contracted tuberculosis and died fewer than five years after he arrived. His body was then subjected to an autopsy during which his brain was removed and sent to the Smithsonian,

where it languished for decades before being returned to the Pit River Tribe to be accorded a traditional burial.

Ishi seems to have always represented something larger than himself. Now, on the centennial of his passing, it's time to see him as an individual human being. "Ishi," after all, means "man." That means trying to imagine what his life was like before Oroville.



"Ishi" in 1915

Ishi was born around 1860, when the Yahi people and the invading Gold Rush settlers were entrenched in bitter, bloody hostilities that raged for years. By the early 1870s, the Yahi numbered only 15, and all of them went into hiding, adopting such a secretive existence that they were presumed to have died out. Several decades later, only four remained: Ishi, his mother, sister and

uncle. Those four persisted in anonymity until November 1908, when everything fell apart. Surveyors stumbled upon their hidden village while Ishi was away; his uncle and sister fled, and were never seen again. His mother, ill and immobile, was left unharmed, but died soon after. Afterward, Ishi entered an era of solitude the likes of which you and I will never know, let alone comprehend.

For a thousand days, Ishi was utterly alone. It's not the length of time that's so difficult to grasp, it's the poignancy and magnitude of his isolation. He'd lived his entire life in a tiny world that had shrunk until he was the only one left in it. He wasn't just the last of his family, he was the last of his culture, of his nation. What toll did that exact from him? What happens to hope when the future offers nothing but more isolation? How that affected Ishi we'll never

know, for he was reluctant to talk about his life in the wild. I don't know whether anyone ever asked him why he undertook his fateful journey in the summer of 1911. Some say he lost the will to live; others think that he was starving. If he was hungry, I believe it was for something other than food.

People have long wondered what effect "civilization" had on Ishi. Another question is to wonder what effect Ishi had on society. His greatest impact has been as a symbol — of the end of the Wild West, or of Anglo-Native American relations, a 500-year-old culture clash encapsulated in one man's experience.

Today, there might be another interpretation of his life: Ishi as inspiration. It's not just that he endured, but how he did. Ishi lived out his days in an unfamiliar world, but he was no lackey. He may have been given a suit and tie to wear, but he never did reveal his name. And he never lost his humanity. He didn't withdraw upon entering a strange new world. He forged friendships and made the most of his new life, touching those who knew him with his gentleness and forbearance.

Ishi was much more than "the last wild Indian." He was a man who had looked into an abyss of genocide and loneliness and somehow emerged with his mind and senses intact and alert; he was able to adapt, as much as possible, to the world that had ended his. He handled "civilization" far better than it handled him.

Joseph Belli is a contributor to Writers on the Range, the opinion service of High Country News. He is a wildlife biologist and lives along Pacheco Pass, California.



Year's end quiz

Happy almost New Year! Wow, we've been through a lot. Let's take a look back at 2016 and see how much of the silliness you remember. We're not going to talk about Hillary. Too sad. But here's an end-of-the-year quiz about:

Republicans We Once Knew
1. It's been a long year for Chris Christie, but he made history when ...

A) The National Governors Association voted him "Least Likely to Succeed."

B) A Quinnipiac poll in New Jersey showed his job disapproval rating at 77 percent.

C) He did the tango on "Dancing With the Stars."

2. Ted Cruz said that when his wife, Heidi, became first lady ...

A) "She'll put prayer back in the prayer breakfast."

B) "Michelle Obama's garden will become a croquet court."

C) "French fries are coming back to the cafeteria."

3. Marco Rubio's ad about how "It's Morning Again in America" made news because ...

A) It was an excellent depiction of why he is truly a Reagan conservative.

B) It was filmed in a way that made Rubio appear to be more than 6 feet tall.

C) It opened with a shot of the Vancouver, British Columbia, skyline.

4. In a debate, Ben Carson said that when a president vets potential Supreme Court nominees, he should consider ...

A) "How they'd look in the group picture."

B) "The fruit salad of their life."

C) "Legal things."

The Cabinet of Tomorrow

5. Rick Perry, Donald Trump's nominee for secretary of energy ...

A) Lost the paso doble competition to Vanilla Ice on "Dancing With the Stars."

B) Came up with some new ideas for combating global warming.

C) Said his earlier reference to Trump's campaign as "a barking carnival act" was simply "one of my 'oops' moments."

6. Retired Gen. Jim Mattis, Trump's selection for secretary of defense, is nicknamed ...

A) Mad Dog.

B) Franky Corgi.

C) Sullen Setter.

7. Linda McMahon, Trump's pick to head the Small Business Administration, has known the president-elect a long time. McMahon's husband, Vince, once paired with Trump in a ...

A) Professional wrestling production in which Trump shaved off McMahon's hair.

B) Build-the-Wall golf match in which they tried to see who could hit the most balls into Mexico.



GAIL COLLINS
Comment

C) Public service announcement warning young men about steroid abuse.

8. Trump's choice for labor secretary, Andrew Puzder, is a fast-food franchise baron who once said ...

A) "Vegetables are much more dangerous than people realize."

B) "I like beautiful women eating burgers in bikinis. I think it's very American."

C) "Everybody has a minimum wage. Mine just happens to be \$1 million a year."

Trump, Trump, Trump

9. Trump won the Electoral College by one of the lowest margins in U.S. history and got nearly 3 million votes fewer than Hillary Clinton. Afterward, he referred to his victory as ...

A) "God's will."

B) "A gift from the founding fathers."

C) "A landslide."

10. In a TV interview, Trump said that when he looks in the mirror he sees ...

A) "Orange skin."

B) "Fantastic hair."

C) "A person that is 35 years old."

11. Trump said he didn't need a daily intelligence briefing because ...

A) "I'm, like, a smart person."

B) "The CIA is out to get me."

C) "Putin's people give me plenty of information."

12. Trump's doctor, who wrote the famous letter declaring Trump would be "the healthiest individual ever elected to the presidency," gave an interview in which he said it had never occurred to him that Trump, at 70, would be the oldest president-elect. But he added ...

A) "70 is the new 41."

B) "If something happens to him, then it happens to him. ... That's why we have a vice president and a speaker of the House and a whole line of people. They can just keep dying."

C) "Bronzer keeps you young."

And in Other News ...

13. In a Seattle suburb, Dane Gallion was so unnerved by stories of mass shootings that he armed himself before going to see the movie "13 Hours: The Secret Soldiers of Benghazi." Watching the film with a handgun tucked into his waistband, Gallion ...

A) Became a hero when a disturbed man waving a rifle walked into the auditorium.

B) Became a hero when he stopped an armed robbery at the snack bar.

C) Accidentally shot the woman sitting in front of him.

ANSWERS: 1-B, 2-C, 3-C, 4-B, 5-A, 6-A, 7-A, 8-B, 9-C, 10-C, 11-A, 12-B, 13-C

Gail Collins joined the New York Times in 1995 as a member of the editorial board.

Voters must heed wake-up call

The good news in Oregon for those of us who have grown weary of one-party control is that Republican Dennis Richardson will be our new Secretary of State for the next four years. The voters of Oregon also saw through the agenda of the public unions and defeated Measure 97. This measure would have made the people of Oregon \$6 billion poorer, added another 18,000 public union jobs and chased away 38,000 jobs from the private workforce (per an analysis done by the nonpartisan Legislative Revenue Office.)

More good news at the state level is that Republicans picked up a Senate seat so there is no longer a Democrat supermajority in the Senate. The disappointing news is that the House Republicans did not add any members to their caucus and are still only one seat away from a super-minority just as we were in 2015-16.

Examples abound in poor policy that has been passed in the last two legislative sessions and then topped off by the elitist public union's introduction of Measure 97. The fallout that has ensued leaves Oregon's majority party unable to pay for the spending and poor investments they have created over the last 30 years. And they now blame their lack of management on the business community. A shortfall in revenue when revenue has increased by \$3.1 billion since 2014 is hard to imagine. How about mismanaged government, shortsightedness, fiscal irresponsibility and payback to the public unions that contribute heavily to their campaigns?

Well, what's coming for 2017? A common-sense approach might be to look at serious reductions in spending and living within our means, but instead we are seeing more tax proposals coming from the left. More proposed regulations and mandates for businesses including predictive scheduling and requiring companies' financial records to be made public. Do you think that will bring good job creators to our doorstep? Me neither.



GREG BARRETO
Comment

The fact is, there will never be enough money to satisfy this state's wants.

In real life, we wish a lot for things. We say, "It sure would be nice if we could only afford it." There are many things we would enjoy, but can they be paid for?

Any government program, regardless of the value, must be paid for. The most basic rule of economics comes into play. There is a cost to everything and there are no free lunches, period. The question is, how much can we afford?

Listening to the governor, the speaker and the Senate president at this month's business summit, it's all the fault of the business community that the state doesn't have enough money. The fact is, there will never be enough money to satisfy this state's wants. The government was never intended to satisfy our wants — regardless of what those on the far left continue to say. Everyone should live within their means and those that are able should pay their own way and this includes the state of Oregon. Just because we want a new car when we can't afford a new car doesn't mean we should expect someone else to buy it for us.

But don't be discouraged, we can only go down this road for so long until the voters that have elected our legislators into office start to realize that if we continue to dig a deeper financial hole, at some point, we will be unable to dig ourselves out. And I'd say we're just about there. Someone must pay, and if the burden falls on the business community, I anticipate some businesses that can, will start to move out of the state as the majority party continues to demonize them. Every rock will be turned over to extract more revenue from everyone, including the middle-class worker, to satisfy this insatiable bent of unbridled spending. I hope voters hear their wake-up call.

The next legislative session starts Feb. 1. It should be an interesting year.

Greg Barreto, of Cove, represents District 58 in the Oregon House of Representatives.

States have power to protect environment

The New York Times, Dec. 26

State governments will serve as an important bulwark against any attempt by President-elect Donald Trump to roll back the progress the United States has made in addressing climate change. And that's good news for the planet.

Over the last decade or so, most states have reduced their greenhouse gas emissions by promoting energy efficiency and renewable fuels. These trends should continue as clean energy costs continue to decline and, in some parts of the country, fall below the cost of dirtier fuels like coal.

The Brookings Institution reported this month that between 2000 and 2014, 33 states and the District of Columbia cut carbon emissions while expanding their economies. That list includes red states run by Republican legislatures, like Alaska, Georgia, Tennessee and West Virginia.

Many people expect Trump to walk away from President Obama's commitments under the Paris climate agreement and get rid of or weaken the E.P.A.'s Clean Power Plan, which requires states to lower carbon emissions from the electricity sector. He and his appointees might also try to water down fuel economy regulations for cars and trucks, and cut clean energy tax incentives and research spending.

States could blunt much of that damage. Even now, many states will be able to meet the Clean Power Plan's targets by following through on planned investments and increasing energy efficiency, according to

M. J. Bradley and Associates, a research and consulting firm. Some populous states have set targets that are even more ambitious and appear to be on track to meet them.

California and New York plan to cut greenhouse gas emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030. Hawaii hopes to get all of its electricity from renewable sources by 2045. This month, Charlie Baker, the Republican governor of Massachusetts, proposed new rules for power plants and vehicles to make sure the state achieves its goal of a 25 percent cut from 1990 levels by 2020. Emissions are already down by around 20 percent.

Cheap natural gas, which has increasingly replaced coal as a fuel source, has had a lot to do with this progress, but so has the drop in the cost of wind and solar power — 41 percent in the case of land-based wind turbines and 64 percent for solar, between 2008 and 2015, according to the Energy Department. The cost of batteries has dropped by almost three-fourths. In some states, including Iowa, Illinois, Kansas, Nebraska and parts of Texas, new wind turbines can generate electricity at a lower cost, without subsidies, than any other technology, according to a report published this month by researchers at the University of Texas at Austin.

States are also beginning to put a price on carbon emissions to increase the cost of older fuels and encourage cleaner sources of energy, which Congress has refused to do. California has a cap and trade system in which electric utilities, fuel distributors and other businesses have to buy emission permits through auctions or from one another.