

## Quick takes

### Stolen tiny home found

So happy when I passed them hauling it into town when I was on my way home from work. I literally yelled out loud in my car "Yay they found it!" Lol!!

— **Chrystal Moore**

So happy that he has his property back. Now if they can find the person or persons who took it and get things straightened out for him.

— **Kathy Rager Horn Hess**

Now please tell him to put a GPS monitor in this house.

— **Leys Knight**

### Mega-dairy construction

This does not sound like a very humane and organic operation. Looks like the quality of the dairy product would not be very high. Looks like a corporate bully operation to me.

— **Sharla McDonald**

I live in an area (Idaho) that has many dairies within 20 miles. My county has more than 280,000 cows, we are healthy and they are managed well and have created hundreds of job. I hope things work out well.

— **Sharon Lee Huff Cheney**

Bring back the tree farm! I keep hoping that part of it will be salvaged!

— **Shilo Smith**

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.

# Predator poachers must be held responsible

By **ROB KLAVINS**  
*Oregon Wild*

Appreciation for native wildlife is something nearly all Americans share. Wildlife bring value and belong to all of us — not just those of us lucky enough to live near our state's big wild places or those who shoot them with cameras rather than rifles.

Some animals challenge us, but poaching is a crime against us all. Recent efforts to address the problem are welcome, but show just how far we have to go.

Too often, poaching is considered an exotic problem on faraway continents where animals like elephants and rhinos are prized for their ivory and horns. Less recognized is the enormous problem closer to home.

Exhibit A is the easy passage of Measure 100 in the same year that saw Oregon's legislature create legal loopholes for poachers and its wildlife agency defend allowing hunting of wolves as soon as this year.

Poaching laws are difficult to enforce, but the problem has deep roots that make powerful interests uncomfortable.

Even in wildlife-loving Oregon, our efforts show a reluctance to take the first step of admitting we have a problem — and the influence of politics.

When one of Oregon's rare moose was illegally killed in Wallowa County, it was front page news. New laws mean that if the animal was sporting antlers, the crime is punishable by \$50,000. News of wolf poaching is usually buried in annual agency reports. The fine for killing a wolf or cougar maxes out at \$7,500.

Wolf recovery in Northeast Oregon is no

longer a novelty. However, that's not true everywhere. OR-28, the matriarch of the Silver Lake wolves, was killed in October in Southern Oregon. The investigation into her death remains shrouded in secrecy. Had she, her pup, and her 8-year old partner (another Wallowa County disperser) survived, they might have officially been designated the second known wolf pack outside Oregon's Northeast corner.

It's not an isolated incident. In 2015, one-in-five monitored wolves were illegally killed — or died under mysterious circumstance — a number sadly in line with states like Idaho and Wyoming.

That rate is also consistent with deer poaching in Oregon. A recent migration study incidentally revealed just as many mule deer killed legally by hunters as were killed illegally.

Does that startling rate of poaching apply to other wildlife? We simply don't know.

While most law-abiding hunters share a disdain for poachers and do their part, far too many make excuses or turn a blind eye to it in their own communities — especially when its wolves, condors, or other wildlife viewed as controversial.

Poaching has become so accepted in some communities that it is not only tolerated in online forums, but on bumper stickers proudly proclaiming the poacher's cowardly creed to "shoot, shovel and shut up."

Despite all this, even acknowledging

poaching can be controversial. Oregon's leaders and Department of Fish and Wildlife lack the resources — and the will — to study the problem.

## Even in wildlife-loving Oregon, our efforts to combat poaching show a reluctance to admit we have a problem.

What Oregon has done instead is propose policies to suppress carnivore populations by killing them if less controversial and common wildlife decline. So, while it is estimated that 20 percent of some game populations are killed illegally by humans, rather than increase enforcement or risk angering some constituencies, Oregon leaves the door open to reward poaching by increasing the legalized

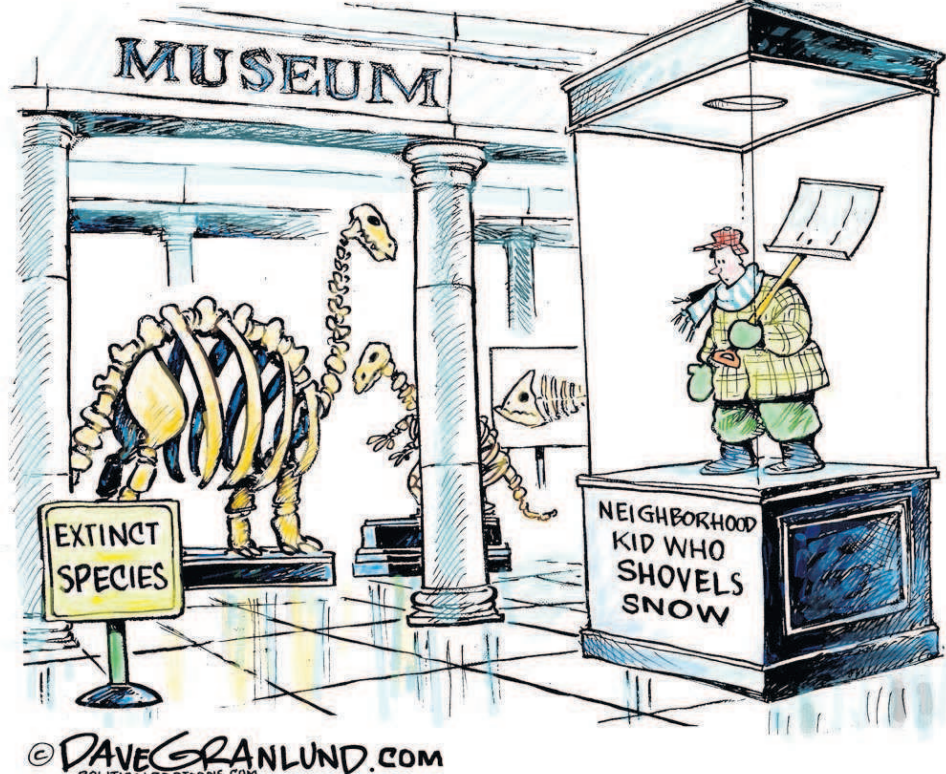
killing of native hunters.

Scapegoating wolves, cougars, cormorants, sea lions, and ravens — and the people who appreciate them — is deemed a higher priority than enforcing the law or addressing root problems that make powerful interests uncomfortable.

Oregon needs to take poaching seriously, not just the illegal trafficking of exotic animal parts from around the world, or charismatic game species — but all illegal killing. Right here at home. The issue of poaching cries out for more study, funding for enforcement, and wildlife policies that are in line with broadly held public values.

Wildlife belong to all Americans. It's time to stop letting poachers steal from us.

Rob Klavins is northeast Oregon field coordinator for Oregon Wild. He lives in Enterprise.



## Why Americans care about Trump's tax return

WASHINGTON — In his news conference on Wednesday, President-elect Donald J. Trump claimed that the American public did not care that he had not released his tax returns, as has been routine for every presidential nominee since Watergate. He could not be more wrong. When I asked users on Twitter, the president-elect's favored megaphone, to retweet if they cared about Mr. Trump's tax returns, within hours more than 79,000 people responded.

The reason is simple. Without these returns, Americans cannot know whether he is using the presidency to enrich himself and his family. Americans won't know whether a policy he proposes primarily benefits steelworkers in Pennsylvania or lines his own pocket.

They will also be unable to tell whether Mr. Trump is telling the truth when he claims to have no connections to Russia, contradicting public evidence and statements by his own son. His stated excuse about being under audit doesn't pass the smell test. Previous presidents and nominees have released their returns under the same circumstances.

That's why I and dozens of congressional colleagues have introduced legislation to force future presidential nominees and presidents to release their tax returns. As representatives of the people, if we can't trust the executive branch to act ethically, we must force it to do so.

The portents were already not good. In this election, Mr. Trump engaged in a profoundly cynical campaign that bulldozed faith in our government institutions. Now, in the most bizarre presidential transition in memory, he has combined praise of Russia's "very smart" president, Vladimir V. Putin, with exceptional secrecy over his taxes and business dealings amid persistent reports about his associates' connections to Russia.

In this environment, every claim takes on an air of credibility. It is no surprise, then, that the sensational and unverified accusations published online this week stirred a media frenzy. I cannot comment on these reports, or on whether there is any truth to their contents.

This is not the real issue, for what

we know is bad enough. Mr. Trump is preparing to take office without having cleared the lowest ethical bar required to lead our nation.

Mr. Trump does not care about conflicts of interest. His proposal to separate himself from his business would have him continue to own his company, with his sons in charge. This arrangement "doesn't meet

the standards," said the director of the nonpartisan Office of Government Ethics, that "every president in the past four decades has met."

Other American institutions have not done enough to force Mr. Trump to be accountable. On Tuesday, the F.B.I. director, James B. Comey, refused to answer my question about whether the bureau had investigated ties between Trump associates and Russia that had been widely reported. Mr. Comey claimed that he did not speak about investigations, yet his actions of the past few months clearly contradict that statement.

Without transparency about the extent and nature of his business dealings, it will not be possible for the American public to track whether Mr. Trump is abusing his power, other than through leaks and unverified reports that will simply tear this government down cut by cut. The Republican-controlled Congress has not only failed to hold Mr. Trump accountable, but it has even taken steps to roll back existing ethics rules.

With the notable exception of my colleague Orrin Hatch of Utah, Republican Senate leaders have attempted to rush Mr. Trump's cabinet picks through the Senate with a rubber stamp. By scheduling eight confirmation hearings in one week, in many cases even before the Office of Government Ethics had finished its vetting, Republican leaders have put political expediency ahead of their duty.

Meanwhile, leaders in the House attempted to neuter the independent Office of Congressional Ethics — a move that was opposed by Mr. Trump, apparently a fan of oversight for anyone but himself — and they succeeded in passing a law that

would allow political retribution against individual federal employees, by cutting their salaries to \$1. This heralds a return to the days when public lands and public policies were up for sale to special interests at the bidding of powerful congressmen.

Americans expect better of their elected officials. But Mr. Trump has done nothing to live up to the responsibilities of his office.

When negative news stories surface, he goes on the attack. This week, Mr. Trump said that the release of the unconfirmed memo was a smear akin to "something that Nazi Germany would have done and

did do." This bluster was not only antagonistic toward the intelligence agencies that serve this country, but deeply insulting to victims of the Holocaust.

My parents lived in Nazi Germany. They saw institutions being corrupted and turned against them, merely because they were Jews. My father was kicked out of school for being Jewish. He and my mother spent years living in fear of the knock on the door. They were fortunate to escape to America and to make good lives here, but we lost family in Kristallnacht.

Mr. Trump's brush with rumor and innuendo is nothing like their experience. It is something he has brought on himself by running a campaign of disinformation rather than making full disclosure to the American people. He must ensure that a Trump administration will not return us to the days of Richard M. Nixon, or, worse, the scandal-ridden term of Warren G. Harding.

To do so, Mr. Trump must face the fact that independent nonpartisan bodies like the Office of Government Ethics are not out to get him; they are here to help him govern according to the rule of law. Mr. Trump chose to run for president, he won and is about to assume office as the most powerful man in the world. His responsibility now is the American people, not his family, his companies or his own bottom line.

Ron Wyden, Democrat of Oregon, is a United States senator. This op-ed first appeared Thursday in the *New York Times*.

## Through rain and snow to get sworn in

Editor's note: This is Sen. Bill Hansell's (R-Athena) account of getting to Salem during a snow storm Monday to swear in as a state legislator. He was accompanied by his wife, Margaret.

Because of the weather I decided to fly, avoiding the possible closure in the Gorge. I flew out of Pendleton Saturday night only to have the flight return because of freezing rain in Portland.

I then booked the first flight Sunday morning, but when I arrived at the airport, all flights had been canceled for the day.

We decided if I was going to make it, we had to drive. On our journey to Salem

we experienced almost every kind of winter road condition — packed snow, unplowed snow 8-10 inches in much of the fast lane a little less in the traveled lane, and black ice from Multnomah Falls to Portland.

The same would be true for the winter weather. We started off with sleet and snow, then just sleet, and then the other side of Boardman pretty heavy snow. We could not see the Washington side of the Columbia. Into the Gorge we encountered wind that blew the snow. Freezing rain greeted us at Multnomah Falls, which continued until we hit 35 degrees on Highway 205 in Portland. From there we were in pouring rain until Salem.

It took us around seven hours, but make it we did. I am reminded of a phrase Lewis and Clark often used to close or begin a journal entry: "We proceeded on."

Senate President Peter Courtney made comment of the effort Margaret and I made to be there for the opening session.

The Bible Margaret is holding in the picture is the same one I have used every time I took an oath of office. If I have counted right, eight times as a county commissioner, once when I took office as president of the National Association of Counties, and now twice as an Oregon state senator.

Bill Hansell (R-Athena) is beginning his second term in the state senate. He will serve on the Workforce Committee, Special Committee on Conduct, Joint Committee on Ways and Means, Transportation and Economic Development Subcommittee and Legislative Administration Committee.



**RON WYDEN**  
Comment



Contributed photo  
**Sen. Bill Hansell (R-Athena) swears in to his second term in the state legislature in Salem on Monday with his wife, Margaret, at his side.**