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OUR VIEW

Poaching and punishment

This hunting season, plenty of deer and elk have been harvested from the fertile mountains of Eastern Oregon.

Many of them were taken legally. But too many were not.

Poaching has been a problem since the first king laid down the first rules for hunting. And it continues to this day to be a concern for hunters, as well as other Oregonians who use their tax dollars and their management practices to protect and lawfully and ethically harvest our state's bounty of nature and protein.

Just this year, multiple violations have been witnessed by police and ethical hunters, from Heppner to La Grande and from Tollgate to Ukiah. Animals senselessly slaughtered for their antlers or for nothing at all — blood lust or stupidity. When that happens, everyone loses — though no one more than the animal itself.

Last year, a Pendleton hunter and guide — a former board member for the Mule Deer Foundation — admitted to illegally killing one of the state's largest mule deer. For his crime, he paid \$8,500 restitution and his hunting license was suspended for three years. Also in 2016, an Elgin trio was charged with killing and wasting two bull elk. Then there was also the illegal poaching of bighorn sheep from alongside Interstate 84 in Gilliam County. Wolves have been killed in suspicious circumstances from the Blue Mountains all the way to Klamath Falls. And in Tuesday's police log, we noted a man allegedly driving drunk down Highway 11 with a poached deer in the bed of his pickup.

And these are just the few high-profile or highly stupid, isolated incidents that law enforcement are able to build a case around. Much more often, investigators are not able to pin a crime on anyone, or those crimes go undiscovered in the first place. It is exceedingly difficult to get convictions on game crimes.

There are two kinds of poachers: those who purposely take illegal

actions, knowing full well their mistake, and are unable to stop themselves or frankly just don't care. But there are also hunters who have every intent of following the law, but make in-the-moment errors in judgment or fact. For them, self-reporting an error is critical. But a much better option is going back to basics: Before you take any shot, look closely at your animal. Look at it again. Look at what is on its head, look at what is behind it, know what is legal with your tag in your unit.

The best way to defeat poaching is good ethical hunting practices. The sport relies on it for safe and reasonable harvest that reduces

pain and unnecessary harm. It must be taught from mothers and fathers to sons and daughters.

Yet we know that many poachers learned their poaching habits from their

mothers and fathers — that's where media and law enforcement must come in, and hunter's education classes that are required for young hunters.

We must teach and promote the right way to do it, and we must punish those who fall short.

In our opinion, a continual reminder of hunting ethics must be in tandem with increased punishments. It does not seem too cruel, harsh or unusual for a poaching crime to cost a person their hunting privileges for the rest of their life.

And poaching an animal that the state has sunk significant resources into — by conserving necessary habitat, paying for game wardens and biologists and attorneys — should cost a criminal a significant dollar amount if they are convicted. On top of it, they should pay for depriving other hunters of a lost opportunity to harvest.

In our book, it doesn't matter whether the poached prey is an elk or steelhead, moose or wolf. Our outdoor heritage rests on playing by the rules. For the system to remain, those rules must be enforced and they must be followed.

We must teach and promote the right way to hunt.

Unsigned editorials are the opinion of the East Oregonian editorial board of publisher Kathryn Brown, managing editor Daniel Wattenburger, and opinion page editor Tim Trainor. Other columns, letters and cartoons on this page express the opinions of the authors and not necessarily that of the East Oregonian.

OTHER VIEWS

Bring your gun to church

Amarillo (Tex.) Globe-News

Churches and guns do not seem a fitting combination. A place of worship? And a weapon? Sacrilegious, right? Not in Texas, thankfully.

While churches and guns do not seem to fit, the reality is they do — legally — in Texas.

The recent mass shooting at a church in Sutherland Springs — the worst mass shooting in Lone Star State history — has put the focus (once again) on gun control.

And since churches (along with schools) are often targets for evil and insane acts of violence, it needs to be pointed out that churches in Texas have had the ability to protect their members — with guns — for quite some time.

State Rep. Matt Rinaldi, R-Irving, is credited for spearheading a bill allowing places of worship to have armed volunteer guards. The bill became a state law that took effect in September.

According to the Texas Legislature website, there were similar bills in the 85th Legislature, one authored by state Rep. Four Price, R-Amarillo (HB 981). HB 421 was authored by Rinaldi and had several co-authors.

Those who attend larger churches in Amarillo have no doubt seen members of Amarillo Police Department on church grounds during services. However, smaller churches may not have the resources to compensate law enforcement personnel to provide security during their services.

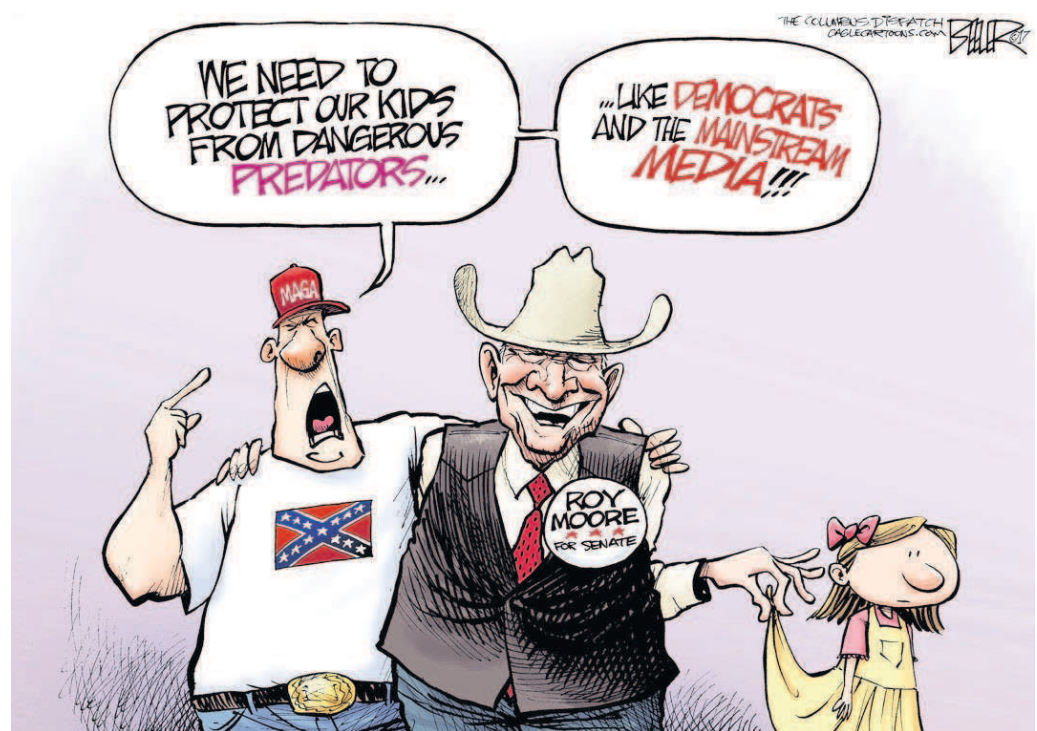
So where does this leave such churches? Rinaldi's bill addresses this problem.

Tom Nichols, a professor at the Naval War College and the Harvard Extension School, offered a different perspective recently in the *Los Angeles Times*: "The desire to bring guns to churches is not about rights, but about risk. You have the right to carry a gun. But should you? If the main reason you're holstering up in the morning is because it's a family tradition where you live, or because you have a particular need to do so, or merely because you feel better with a gun, that is your right. But if you are doing so because you think you're in danger from the next mass shooting, then you should ask yourself whether you're nearly as capable, trained and judicious as you think you are — and why you are spending your days, including your day of worship — obsessing over one of the least likely things that could happen to you."

In Texas, those who want to carry a gun legally must be licensed by the state, and complete the review process to be licensed. This license allows Texans to protect themselves — and others — by legally carrying a firearm.

If the state determines a person is capable and responsible enough to carry a gun, why should this right cease to exist at the church door?

And if a church — or any place of worship — has members licensed by the state to carry a gun, the church should be able to extend this right to protect its members.



OTHER VIEWS

At Air Force Academy, a perfect hoax for age of Trump

It's hard to exaggerate the praise heaped on Air Force Gen. Jay Silveria after his impassioned speech against racism went viral at the end of September. Silveria, superintendent of the Air Force Academy, spoke after five black cadet candidates at the academy's prep school found racial slurs written on message boards outside their rooms.

"If you can't treat someone from another race or a different color skin with dignity and respect, then you need to get out," an angry Silveria told students. "If you can't treat someone with dignity and respect, then get out." When video of his speech hit the internet — nearly two million YouTube views — and then cable TV, and then the old-fashioned press, the applause began. Silveria, some said, was a true American hero.

But in a few of the nation's largest media outlets, the acclaim wasn't just about Silveria. For some, celebrating Silveria was at least as much, if not more, about President Trump than it was about the Air Force general. For them, it was not enough to praise Silveria. One must also to denounce Trump.

The *Washington Post* published an editorial headlined, "Moral guidance, if not from the president." Silveria's speech was "a welcome reminder of what leadership can look like," the paper wrote, "all the more necessary and welcome because of the absence of leadership at the highest levels of government."

On television, CNN took a leading role in lauding Silveria. Anchor Brooke Baldwin began a segment on the general by saying, "Some say the president's rhetoric is divisive, not that of a commander-in-chief. Others will say that's why they love him. What is true, whether you agree with him or not, he has a tendency to go too far, to divide rather than unite. There's a moment I wanted to share with you today that has so many people saying, 'Those are the words of a leader,' at a time when the divided nation needs them most."

Baldwin played a long clip of Silveria's speech and then introduced a live interview with Silveria himself. She began the interview with, "May I just say bravo ..."

CNN's Don Lemon also reported the Silveria story as a Trump story. "I really hope the president is watching tonight as well as his supporters," Lemon said, adding that Silveria's words "are a stark reminder of everything our president is not saying."

"I think it's just a crying shame we don't have this kind of leadership from the president," added CNN's Van Jones.

Now, as everyone knows, there's an update to the story. The cadet candidate who reported the racial slurs has admitted that he was behind the whole thing. It was all a hoax. The



BYRON YORK
Comment

young man, who is black, has left the academy.

Anyone who follows such incidents, certainly anyone in the news business, should have known that there was a substantial chance the Air Force Academy vandalism was a fake. Too many such incidents have turned out to be hoaxes not to raise suspicions about new ones, pending the results of an investigation.

There was the young black man in Kansas who admitted writing racist graffiti on his car. There was the black man in Michigan charged in three racist graffiti incidents at Eastern Michigan University. There was the young Muslim woman in

New York who admitted making up a story about being attacked by white Trump supporters. The black Bowling Green State University student who said white Trump supporters threw rocks at her. The University of Louisiana student who said a white man wearing a Trump hat tried to pull off her hijab.

Then there was the wave of stories about threats to Jewish community centers — stories that received widespread news coverage in the context

of the new Trump presidency. Most of the threats were made by a teenager in Israel, with the others made by a former journalist who was somehow trying to get back at a former girlfriend.

None of that means that all hate crimes reports are false. But it does mean people reporting and commenting on them should be cautious until the facts are known.

Gen. Silveria chose not to be cautious.

Now, Silveria has chosen to double down on his message. "Regardless of the circumstances under which those words were written, they were written, and that deserved to be addressed," Silveria said in a statement to the *Colorado Springs Gazette*. "You can never over-emphasize the need for a culture of dignity and respect — and those who don't understand those concepts aren't welcome here."

There's also a need for accuracy when the head of the Air Force Academy makes a high-profile statement that reaches millions of Americans.

But it seems unlikely Silveria's jump-the-gun performance will hurt him, certainly not with those who repeatedly brought President Trump into coverage of the phony hate crime. When CNN reported Silveria's response to the hoax revelation, Baldwin was quick to offer support. "Well, he's right," Baldwin said of Silveria. "The words ring true. It's just unfortunate to learn who really (did it)."

Byron York is chief political correspondent for *The Washington Examiner*.

YOUR VIEWS

Tim White a different kind of congressional candidate

I'm writing in support of a different sort of candidate for Oregon's 2nd Congressional District — different because of his independence from party dogma and a real desire to see benefit to the residents of our district.

His name is Tim White, and if you examine his positions you'll find that he doesn't conform to the "identity politics" that Steve Bannon rightly identified as the Democrats' vulnerability. Yes, he is in full support of ensuring the rights of all of us, whether we are of a racial minority, LGBTQ, female or male, and especially those of us in the working middle class who have been left behind in times of economic boom.

More importantly, he believes we must stop the wave of undoing the progress America has made on many fronts. That wave has brought us legislation and executive orders that have a crippling effect on protections put in place by previous administrations.

Our health care system is broken, it needs to be fixed not discarded. White believes the ACA deficiencies can be fixed if our representatives would work together and stop the partisan bickering.

Our Veterans Administration is in serious

trouble, leaving our heroic military veterans in a sea of paperwork and bureaucratic delays. Tim believes we can do better by providing adequate funding for facilities and staff and by holding the VA management accountable.

And let's not forget the economic ditch we were in during 2007 and 2008. The GOP is now proposing to gut the protections put in place to prevent a recurrence of that mess — they want to go back to the good old days of an unfettered Wall Street and big banks.

So, it's time for Greg Walden to retire. Eighteen years, and counting, in the House is far too long. Can I honestly say Oregon's 2nd District is on a stronger economic footing than that of 18 years ago? Are our veterans being better served? Has Walden introduced any legislation of substance during his tenure?

I believe the answer to each of these three questions is no. Walden is a faithful party man. He has voted almost 100 percent for Trump policies. If you support everything Trump is doing, then Walden is your man. But I think we need someone who will truly represent us and work hard for us.

Take a look at Tim White. I think you'll find that he will more than measure up on both counts.

Gerry Mueller
Bend