

VOICE of the CHIEFTAIN

Poaching punishes those who play by the rules

Stories from such faraway places as Harney County often do not resonate locally, but the recent sentencing of a Hines couple for their involvement in killing at least seven elk last year carries implications for everyone who hunts across our great region.

The couple, Chris and Stephanie Lardy, both face stiff penalties for the crime that police said occurred in December. Chris Lardy was convicted of taking a bull elk out of season and exceeding the bag limit while Stephanie Lardy pled guilty to aiding/counseling in a game violation. In the wake of the crime, two calves, two cows and a spike bull were left rotting.

The case is significant because our region, to a large extent, represents a vast and rich hunting environment. Every year, hunters enter the woods in hopes of bagging an elk or deer. To a lesser extent, our economy prospers from the influx of hunters.

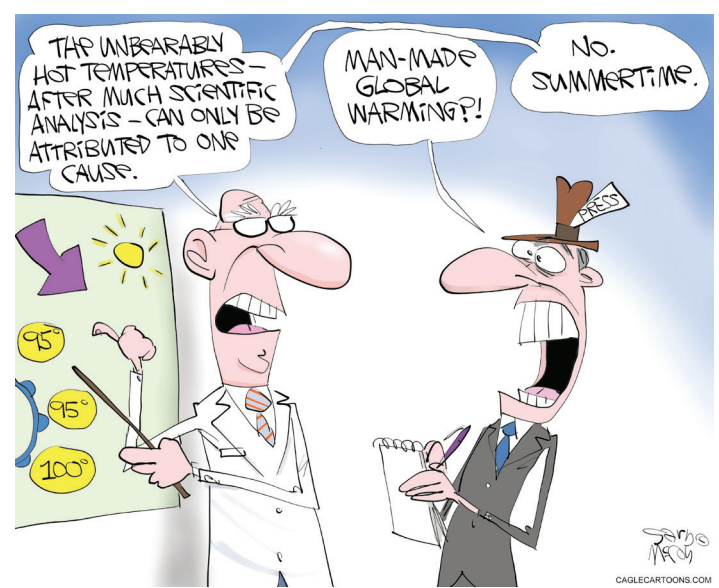
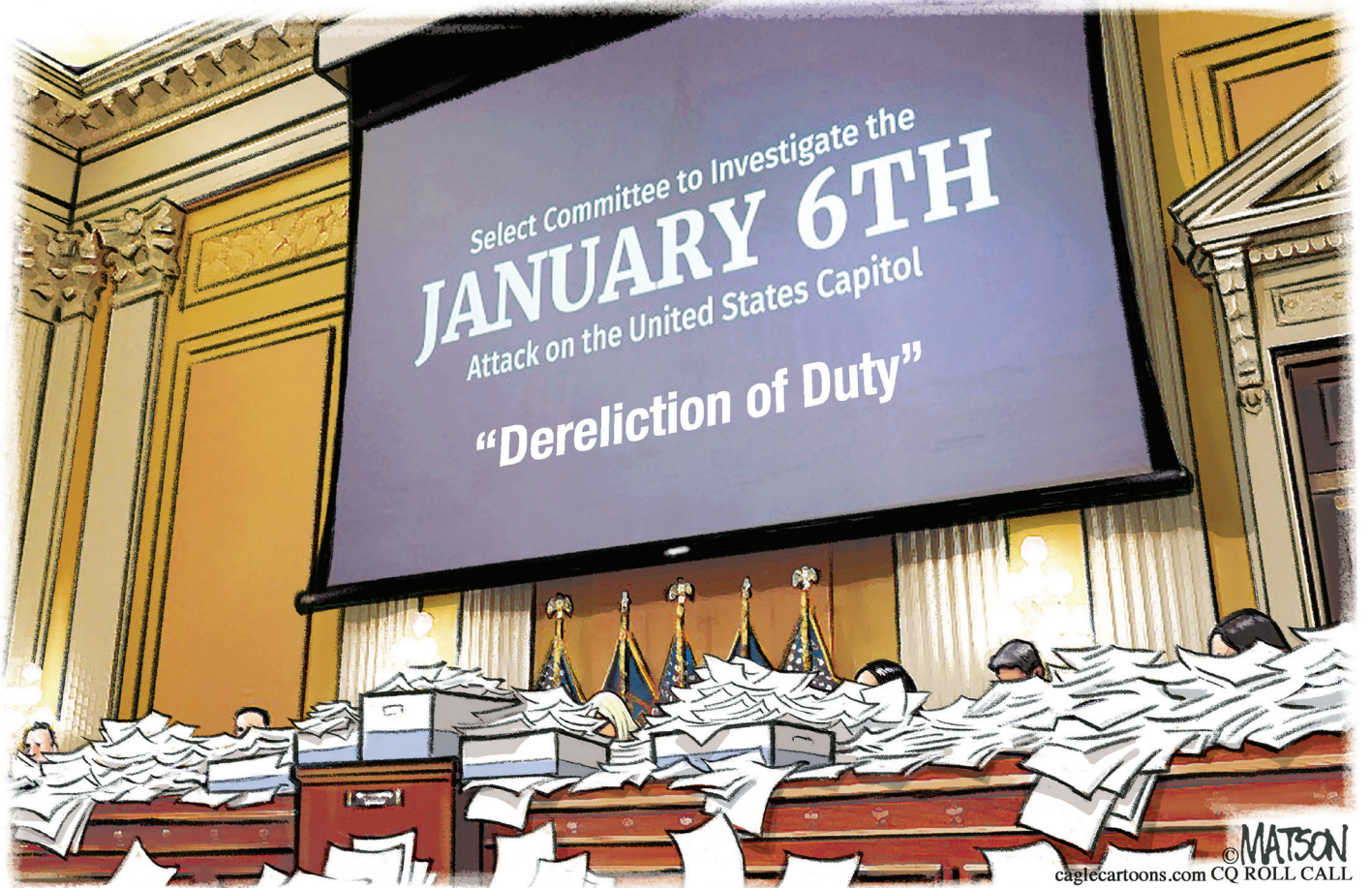
Hunting, then, for many is a serious business. Most hunters follow the rules. They take only what they are allowed to by law. In that way, each hunter is a steward of not only our game herds but of the forests where they search for game.

We are all naturally proud of our traditions of self-sufficiency and resiliency along with the knowledge that we can hunt during the designated season. Hunting for many is generational. Fathers and mothers pass on the tradition to their children.

Yet when anyone poaches or otherwise mars the philosophy of hunting, it damages the entire sport. Not only does it impact the judicial system, but it also punishes those who play by the rules every year. Poaching also sends a message that the rules don't matter. Those who poach conduct their actions of aggression in a concealed manner.

Fortunately, there are laws that keep crimes against our wildlife in check. However, no number of legal statutes can erase what is often the depravity of human nature.

That means all of us have a responsibility to ensure that our great resource — the elk and deer and other game that traverse Eastern Oregon — remain viable for the future. Hunting, is indeed, serious business. We are the ones who can keep our herds of wildlife stable and safe so that when we journey into the woods, lawfully, to enjoy one of our region's great pastimes we won't be disappointed.



Jan. 6 committee reveals Trump's Orwellian attempt to win the election

OTHER VIEWS

Naseem Rakha



Anyone who's read George Orwell's "1984," the dystopian novel about life in the U.S. under an authoritarian regime, knows that to survive, one had to accept whatever Big Brother said no matter how big the lie. Proof you'd come to fully embrace the all-controlling Party was to believe without question that two plus two never equaled four but always the number five. Anyone who claimed otherwise was considered a traitor and treated as such.

I think of that now knowing that despite the hours of testimony and truckloads of evidence of President Donald Trump's attempt to overthrow the election, much of it coming from Trump loyalists, the majority of House and Senate Republicans and many Republican voters, including 50% of them here in Oregon, still swallow and spew Trump's lie, and consider those who do not parrot his prattle like Republican Reps. Liz Cheney and Adam Kinzinger, traitors. Both of these conservatives are central to the committee's investigation and both were censured by Republican party brass for having the temerity to doubt Trump's math.

Yet doubt is exactly what most Americans have.

One of the more damning pieces of evidence that has come out in the investigation is an audio recording of Steve Bannon, one of Trump's closest advisers, telling a group of associates three days before the election that Trump would declare victory on election night no matter how the election was trending. "That doesn't mean he's a winner, but he is just gonna to say

he is," Bannon said. "That's our strategy." He explained to the group that Republicans generally vote on the day of election while Democrats favored mail-in ballots that are tallied later. Trump, said Bannon, would grab the momentum of the early tally and simply claim victory. "If Trump is losing by 10 or 11 o'clock, it's going to be even crazier because he's going to sit right there and say they stole it," Bannon said. "Trump is going to do some crazy shit." He was right.

Around 2:30 a.m. on Nov. 4, with a blue wave starting to gain steam and millions of votes yet to be counted, Trump took to the podium in the East Wing of the White House and declared himself the winner of the election.

In 2016, Trump once told a crowd that he "could stand in the middle of Fifth Avenue and shoot somebody and I wouldn't lose any voters." What he was saying was that as long as he convinced enough people that he was the only candidate with the chutzpah to return the American Dream back to its "rightful owners," he would be forgiven for any behavior, whether it was shooting someone or killing a democracy.

I don't fault Trump supporters for their commitment to the man. History is littered with the debris of people who had fallen under the spell of charlatans. And, quite frankly, I don't even fault Trump for his mercenary attacks on our democracy. The man is exactly what he's always been, a megalomaniac, obsessed with power. He even warned us back in 2016 that he would never accept a loss. He was a cheater and a liar as a businessman, and he is a cheater and a liar as a politician.

Who I find fault with are those in leadership who lack the spine to say "Trump is dead wrong." Sycophants such as Sens. Mitch McConnell, Lindsey Graham and Ted Cruz, people joined at the hip to Trump and his lies because of their own selfish desires for power and their fear of retribution by the very voters they and Trump have cultivated.

The Jan. 6 committee has shown that Trump planned to retain the presidency no matter what. It showed how he used his office to intimidate election workers and politicians who would not do his bidding, and how he brokered his grand lie into a money-making scheme, collecting almost a quarter of a billion dollars in donations to "Stop the Steal." They showed how Trump intentionally riled armed supporters into a frenzy, urging them to go to the Capitol to give his vice president and others the "courage to do the right thing." And they showed that while lawmakers and staff were running for their lives in our nation's Capitol building, Trump sat comfortably in his private dining room watching Fox News and choosing to do nothing to stop the attack. Yet those very people who were escaping Trump's armed insurrection are now trying to punish those Republicans who've provided evidence of the president's seditious acts.

In Orwell's fictionalized world, an all-controlling Party successfully chiseled away truth, and as a result dignity and personal autonomy were lost.

In our world today, the truth continues to be chiseled away by Trump and his lackeys. Attempting to overthrow an election is not a justifiable act; it's treasonous. A violent attack on the Capitol is not heroic; it's criminal. And refusing to accept an election loss is not patriotic; it's pathetic.

Trump lost the election. I'm thankful the Jan. 6 committee is showing the world there are truths to be spoken, and that real patriots know two plus two will always equal four.

Naseem Rakha is a former public radio reporter; news show host and commentator. She is an author of the novel "The Crying Tree," which was inspired by her time covering two executions in Oregon. Naseem spends her time hiking, climbing, rafting and photographing areas throughout the American West.