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March-April 2016 | \$2.50

BOW HUNTERS

The Official Publication of the Oregon Bow Hunters



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FOR TOM

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I have sent out renewal notices to all the clubs and shops that I am aware of which were chartered at one time with OBH. As stated last year, OBH wants all charters for OBH to be due at the same time, the start of the year. If your club or shop is chartering through NFAA disregard OBH renewal notice. Send all OBH and NFAA charter forms to Glen Walker.

If your club is not an OBH affiliate you are not eligible for discounted advertising in OBH magazine or listed in the magazine as an affiliated club or shop and you cannot be listed in the OBH shoot calendar.

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OREGON BOW HUNTERS



On the Cover...



Verlyn Savage of La Grande, an extremely successful hunter, who has been nicknamed the Elk Assassin.

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March 2017.....	Deadline February 4

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president's MESSAGE



■ By Carl **SWARTZ**,
President

Recently a friend gave me a picture of me in my college days with a deer I had taken. I had hung the deer in a tree on campus until I could get it butchered. In that era, all of us hunters attending college kept our arsenal of guns and bows in dorm rooms without objection. That was 1963; I was 20, and that picture has caused me a great deal of reflection about the way things were compared to how they are today. There is not much room for change between now and the next 50 years, for if our society continues on this trajectory, there will be a complete extinction of the hunting community. If our readers are interested in preserving the rights and traditions of hunting, there is no time for apathy!

Within four years, my college days and resulting employment allowed me to hunt in the states of Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Oregon. Licenses in all three states cost \$5-\$7, and that included big game (deer and bear) as well in two of the states. A license holder could hunt in the archery and firearm seasons statewide. In Oregon harvests were high. Hunters often began with a week in mule deer country and, if unsuccessful, hunted the western half of the state for blacktail later in the season. This held true for the firearms season as well.

Families and friends scheduled weekend and longer camping/hunting trips, which often included three generations of hunters. Landowners welcomed hunters; it was generally accepted that if there



were no signs posted, it was open to all. Bag limits were similar to the present, but seasons were longer, and the success rates for deer were much higher than today. The young hunter obviously has never experienced this level of freedom to hunt statewide for several species of big game with the whole family. Even now, it is difficult to comprehend what it was like. Hounds were used to keep bear and cougar populations in balance, and wolves were nonexistent in the state.

What has caused such drastic change, and can any of the progression be reversed? Forests on state and federal lands are not being harvested. It is logging that provides for the growth of feed for the ungulates. Virtually zero feed exists under the canopy of the mature evergreen forests. Private timber companies spray underbrush that would compete with the growth of timber on recently logged sections, but the spraying deprives deer and elk the browse that feeds them. Spraying allows for maximum growth and profit for the targeted timber. Inconsiderate humans have willfully destroyed relations

with land owners by dumping trash on ranches and timber lands and leaving once closed gates open. Thoughtless trespassers have caused numerous forest fires.

Sociological changes have also taken place in attitudes toward predators. Humans who never witness the steps predators play in the food chain somehow accept or deny its existence, nevertheless preferring it to the quick and humane harvest by a hunter. Therefore, by urban demand, predators have experienced several levels of protection and have flourished, thereby removing annually hundreds of thousands of big game animals from the wilderness where it is leave or be devoured for several species of Oregon game. A sort of safety zone exists in and around ranches and agriculture that generally provides feed as well as a level of protection from the predators. Obviously, this results in economic hardships for the ranchers, and their cost recovery is manifested in charging trespass fees for hunting, often higher than the common hunter can afford.

Presently, the cougars and bears are eating our deer and elk, and wolves are flourishing on the same menu. State and federal lands have been depleted of big game, and ranches that allow free access hunting are increasingly rare. Unfortunately, the ODFW have set management levels so low, that when met, do not allow success for a very high percentage of the hunting community. The seasons are shorter, and many are controlled by a lottery draw system. The type of "tool" used for hunting further categorizes the hunter and adds further restrictions. Real estate is divided into public and private, and bow hunters have the fire season to fear, even if, at long last, they have finally drawn the coveted tag. Now add the threat that there is a push to allow cross bows under the archery title.

To add a small ray of hope to this dismal progression, our members need to realize that your board members never stand still and are invited by ODFW to occupy places on committees that present recommendations to the Commission. This Commission makes the rules that become law when passed by the legislature. Currently, OBH has seated members on two committees that are attempting to resolve rancher/elk problems in eastern Oregon and handicapped regulations statewide.

Our OBH membership must unite, just as the urban dwellers have largely united with the opposing agenda. Do not be satisfied with letting our hunting privileges slip away. We need to become a stronger membership with a multitude of ideas, but with a common purpose. And our time is NOW.



Becky Wilson – Editor
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Becky WILSON

Since I began working at this position a few months ago, I have become acquainted with some amazing people. I want you to be cognizant of the incredible people you have working on your behalf as Oregon archers. Two who immediately come to mind are Carl Swartz and Craig Starr, the officers I have the most communication with, often multiple times a week. I have never spent so much energy and attention on emails! Carl Swartz is such a warm, supportive man; I think of him as my own personal cheerleader, coaching me, cheering me on, while at the same time cautioning me about being prepared when criticism comes my way, as it inevitably will. He is a great encourager and sounding board. And Craig Starr – I just hope this organization appreciates what a worker we have in Craig Starr. He puts more effort into his office than any five officers, I am pretty sure. It seems to be his full time job! And he is not afraid to tackle difficult issues; we need people like that. Don't we? He notices things, details, important things that go right past me. I really need his input.

At this time, however, I want to point out one individual who has wiggled into a special place in my heart – Ben Munoz, our North Central Committeeman. This man works so hard for OBH. He is the one who always needs more magazines because of the effort he puts into

distributing them. And this is the man who is still recovering from extremely serious back surgery in December. He knows that when he is finally recovered, doctors need to look at replacing his hip. At the same time he tells me he is sure hoping to make it to Bend in February. Just a couple days ago I visited with Ben on the phone for about a half hour, and more than once I had to grab a tissue and wipe tears from my face. He was sharing with me about his family, his two adopted children and the three foster children he and his wife are caring for. What big hearts they have for kids who need families. He called to express appreciation for the generosity of OBH members toward his family at Christmas time. That conversation made my day!

There was a moment, as I talked to him that my heart nearly stopped; it was then I realized how much he and I have in common. In telling me about the transition he and his wife made into becoming foster parents, he told me that they lost their daughter 14 years ago in an automobile accident. I froze and then chokingly told him that I, too, had lost a daughter to a car accident – my oldest daughter; she was 17. We agreed that although one must learn to live with the loss, and it gets easier with time, it is something you never get over. Ever. I think the next time I see Ben, I will give him a big hug. What a warm, sweet man. Hope you all appreciate the passion and heart he brings to OBH.

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FENCELINE WHITETAIL

The story of my first archery buck by Clayton Lowe

One long, barbed wire fence row lined with sparse 3' tall grass was the only cover to be found. For three evenings the bucks had come over the hill from their Juniper cover, crossed the open wheat stubble to my north, vaulted the fence and ditch into the hay field to my south, crossing in a different "out of range" spot every time. Some evenings they came three hours before dusk; others they meandered down just minutes after shooting light. My in-laws and I had hunted this farm near their home in Enterprise for a few years, yet no one had gotten a buck! From blind sitting to alfalfa crawling, the blown opportunities continued to fuel our passion to take a Wiley Whitetail here! Just helping out before, this was my

first time with a tag in my pocket.

Wool base-layers helped somewhat with the chill that crept across the field from the mountain's sunset shadow, yet did little to pad my legs as they took turns napping. I reviewed yardages to certain rocks, posts, and grass clumps while visualizing shot scenarios. Fighting fatigue, I continually scanned for signs of my quarry. My discomfort suddenly vanished as through grass and barbed wire I spied a large set of antlers on the skyline. I became a predator in the weeds, fully aware of my surroundings and the cold grip of my PSE. Peering through my rangefinder, I watched as four sets of whitetail antlers began a cautious sashay over the hill straight towards me; leading in rare fashion was the

biggest buck I had seen so far!

With building anticipation my eyes followed the bucks towards me. Would they go left or right, or jump the fence on top of me? Would they suddenly veer off and cross out of range? Once on my side of the fence, there would be no cover between us. Finally, they cut to the left towards my back and began angling to cross the fence. Keeping as low as I could, I slowly rotated my body and swung my bow around 180 degrees, like a contortionist turning under a limbo bar. I checked my nock out of habit and sat with rangefinder in hand, waiting. An eternity passed.

A nose, then a rack-topped head

Continued on page 18

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THE SWITCH: LEARNING TO SHOOT LEFT-HANDED

■ Philip MILLER

None of us would choose to have trials in our lives; they just arrive for us to deal with. Some are more difficult than learning to shoot with the off hand, but all can be dealt with, using perseverance and determination built on a foundation of faith. Faced with health problems that threatened to take bow hunting away from me, I found my comfort and solace in knowing how great is God's love. His strength is what sustained me. The past year has been the most tumultuous time of my life regarding my health.

January 23, 2015, three days after meniscus surgery on my right knee, I saw a troubling sight. A black 'curtain' appeared at the top of the vision in my right eye. Recognizing a problem of significant magnitude, I made a quick call to an eye surgeon.

Anyone who has had a medical emergency at 4:30 on a Friday evening knows that getting to see a doctor can be a crap shoot. I was quickly informed that I would need to contact an on-call doctor in Beaverton. A ridiculous game of phone tag began; it was 5:30 P.M. before I was on my way for an evaluation.



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After a two hour drive to the doctor, it was determined that the retina was detaching with surgery scheduled for early the next morning. Before noon on Saturday the surgery was complete, and I was told what I might expect during recovery. A gas bubble was put into the eye, and I would spend ten days in a head-down position to give the retina the best chance of healing.

The retina did reattach, but a membrane began growing over the retina reducing my vision. That was when I began contemplating my future in the sport I enjoy so much. Could I expect to have my vision clear, or should I plan to leave the sport? When would I be able to resume shooting? If I can't see my target clearly, is there any reason to shoot at all? By the end of March, I had decided to learn to shoot a left-handed bow. My left eye was strong, and due to shoulder pain caused by a partial rotator cuff tear, I actually felt better than when shooting right-handed. All I had to do was relearn all those things I had learned

when I first started in archery.

The membrane continued to enlarge, and the surgeons wanted to wait until it finished growing to remove it. These growths can reform if they are removed too early. June 3, 2015, arrived finding me again in surgery to remove the growth. I had high expectations for the procedure to completely restore my vision.

The next day when the patch was removed, I was nearly totally blind in that eye. I was not at all prepared for that. I went from thinking I might be able to go back to my right-handed bow to thinking I might never regain my vision. The doctor said that healing is a very slow process for a retina. It could take a full year for all the healing to come to the eye.

Continuing to practice left-handed I was happy I had committed to shooting left-handed early in this process. Shooting lefty was still a little uncomfortable for me. With elk/deer season now only ten weeks away, I knew I couldn't possibly shoot right-



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Learning to shoot a bow was so much fun when I started archery in 2010. I bought my first bow just days before the start of the year, and I shot at every chance. I had eight months to put it together for my first bow hunting season. Shoot, shoot, and shoot some more. Tuning for broadheads in the weeks before opening day was exciting, as well as frustrating. I wondered if I could really pull off the whole thing. When opening morning arrived, and I managed to double lung a young 3-point that travelled only 35 yards after the pass-through shot.

Now five years later I was starting the entire process over using the wrong side of my body. It felt so awkward at first, but things began to feel better. With summer now half over, I was headed for a third surgery in that eye to remove a cataract. Both retina surgeons had told me cataracts grow rapidly after the eye has been opened;

handed for the foreseeable future. I would not get enough improvement in the right eye to switch back. The

die was cast. I had to get myself to the point that I was certain I could make a kill shot at an elk.

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MY 'PLAN B' BULL

■ Dale STUTVOSS

I don't recall a season opener quite like that of the 2014 season. The weather started out cool with the threat of rain. We woke at 4:00 A.M., ready to drive to the dead end road, headed to our favorite area where we've bagged a few bulls in the past. As it turned out, someone had beaten us to our spot. Not being the type to pile in on someone who got there first so we had to come up with Plan B. Lucky for us we know the area well and went to our second choice area. We boogied up the hill to our second spot and made a set up to start a calling sequence. We got answers



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from two bulls but didn't make any progress bringing them in. We set up a few more times until late morning, no more action, so we headed back to camp to regroup and have some lunch.

After lunch we decided to check back into our first choice area to see if there was any elk sign and see if we could call up a bull. As we got deeper and deeper into our area, the weather started turning from bad to worse. Soon lightning and thunder sounded like it was getting closer and closer, so we decided to head back to camp because we had not secured camp for inclement weather. After tarping and trenching in camp, it was time to start planning for the next day as the remainder of day one was a washout. We had planned to go back into our first choice area again and see if we could get into some elk. It turned out we were not the first ones there, so once again we went to plan B - one of those places that doesn't look all that great from the road so most people drive right by looking for greener pastures. We slipped down into the draw and started calling; immediately we got an answer. We had positioned ourselves right up above a herd of 20 to 30 elk. Also instead of the standard downhill thermals we're used to, we had a slight breeze going sideways up the draw. It couldn't have been better. We were hearing

bulls going off on their own, must have been 5 or 6 bulls. The herd was just milling about, wandering up and down, feeding here and there when I caught a glimpse of one of the bulls heading my way. He gave me a long shot at one point, but I felt it was too far and steep downhill for a safe shot so I had to wait. I wanted him to move more to my right, and that's just what he did, giving me a broadside shot at about 45 yards. It was a steep downhill shot so I lined up the best I could and touched off the release. Something happened, and the bow popped out of my hand. Luckily I had my wrist strap on. All I can figure is that my lower cam was touching the ground, and it definitely affected my shot. The bull moved off back the way he came and was out of sight, but I could still hear him and the rest of the herd sounding off. They were still milling around the area so we continued to call. After another 10 minutes or so a 3 point and cow came to the same area where the first bull was and offered me the same shot I had before, but this being day 2, I decided to hold out for a bigger bull. After another 5 or 10 minutes the first bull I shot at started coming back up the hill with a small cow. As they came around a log, the bull stopped to thrash a tree and then proceeded to come back up the hill to the same place I had shot at him before. One small problem

with this, though, the small cow was sniffing around and moving up the hill toward our downwind side. Then the most amazing thing happened; the wind absolutely died. She was downwind at 15 yards and didn't catch our scent. I had to just ignore the cow and take my shot. I got up on one knee and sighted in for the shot. I touched off the release and couldn't tell if I'd hit him or not; he just stood there looking downhill with his butt towards me. I knocked another arrow and just waited. My brother Ken, who was doing all the calling, gave out a little squeal and got the bull to turn broadside - that was my chance to get another arrow in him. This one I could tell hit him hard. He took off out of sight to our right; we thought we'd give him some time, but as we sat there all quiet, we heard him fall down the hill just out of sight. We sneaked down the hill and started looking for my arrows, peeked over a log and there he was. As it turned out, the first arrow hit one lung, and the second arrow took out the other lung. We had a half mile pack straight up the trail to the truck. It was my shortest hunting season ever being only two days and my first bull taken in August.

Dale Stutevoss has been an avid bow hunter for the past 32 years and is an active member of OBH, OHA, OOC and RMEF.



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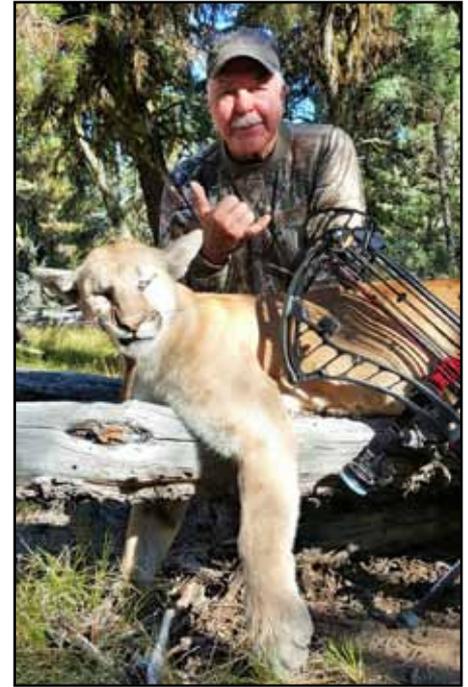
■ Tom POWELL

It was warmer than normal that morning as I started my sit in the tree stand that I call West Stand. I always arrive at my stand well before daylight to settle in and listen for elk movement. As it got light, I heard some coyotes barking. They were not howling, just barking like dogs. This went on for about an hour; it sounded like they were coming closer. I stood up in my stand in anticipation of a shot at a coyote. I could see some movement just inside the brush line, but could not see exactly what it was. Then out came a cougar walking slowly toward my stand. I came to full draw with my BowTech Prodigy and waited for him to get to about 20 yards. The arrow caught him just behind the right shoulder and exited behind the ribs on the opposite side. I saw blood immediately where the arrow hit him. He trotted off in a semi-circle and disappeared over the hill about 50 yards away. In a few seconds, I heard a loud growl that sent chills all over me. As

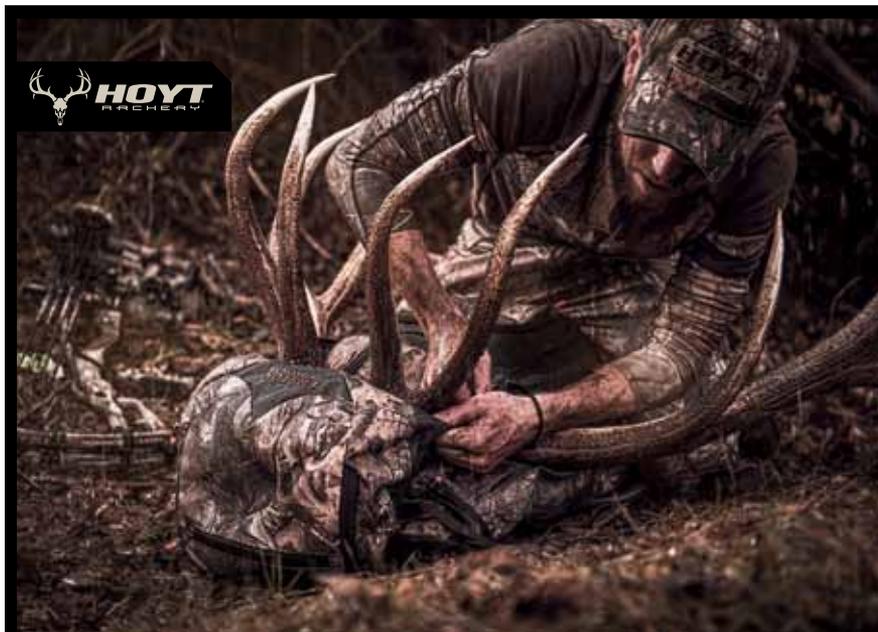
I stood there shaking, I realized that I had just killed a cougar with my bow. I figured the coyotes were harassing the cougar and eventually spooked him out of the brush.

The coyotes continued to bark for the next hour and finally came out following the cougar's trail, but did not present an ethical shot. After the coyotes quit barking, I climbed down from my stand and followed the cougar trail. There was no blood, just some slight disturbances in the pine needles from his paws. I found the cougar a short distance over the hill from where I last saw him. I was amazed about how beautiful this animal is and was impressed with his distinct odor. I took some pictures and called my taxidermist for recommendations on how to skin him out.

I saved the meat, and we are now enjoying some excellent cougar back strap and breakfast sausage. The meat is excellent; it tastes like sweet pork. Even though it is not required to save cougar meat in Oregon, I have to follow my ethics



and bring home whatever I shoot. This was the first cougar I have ever seen alive in the wild spanning over 60 years of hunting. I am getting a full body mount of him walking just as he was when I shot him to preserve the memories.



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ELK DISLOCATION – A BOWHUNTING PROBLEM OR ???

As this is being written, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) is once again initiating consideration of the problem of game animals, especially elk, being dislocated from public lands to private property. ODFW has called for Oregon Bow Hunters (OBH) and other outdoor organizations to have representation on an advisory committee along with representatives of ranchers and, maybe, other private landowners. ODFW's decision to establish an advisory committee apparently stemmed from an annual meeting of the Oregon Cattlemen's Association where they spent a fair amount of time discussing concerns regarding elk damage and elk populations in eastern Oregon. According to ODFW, the purpose of the advisory committee is to talk about eastern Oregon elk populations, damage problems, damage programs and hunting seasons.

The issue of elk dislocation from public lands to private property is not a new one and has been discussed by other advisory committees in past years. Unfortunately, the focus of such discussions from the ranchers and other private landowners has always been to restrict bowhunting on public lands to the exclusion of looking at the problem from a more comprehensive perspective.

There can be little question that there are situations around Oregon where game animal dislocation from public lands onto private property is a real problem. Where it occurs, game animal dislocation adversely impacts both the private landowners and hunters. Private landowners can suffer damage to crops, fences, etc., caused by overly large numbers of game animals on their property. Hunters are impacted because the availability of game on public lands is diminished when many animals move to private property where hunting access is limited or nonexistent. The problem of game animal dislocation is one where both sides on an advisory committee should be looking for meaningful solutions, but that hasn't been the case in past efforts to look at the issue and may well not be the

case this time either.

Game animal dislocation from public lands to private property is a complex issue involving many factors, including factors for which ranchers or other private property owners bear responsibility. Although there are exceptions, most ranchers are very reluctant or even completely unwilling to allow hunters to have access to their property for hunting. The elimination of hunting pressure on private property often creates a safe zone or refuge of sorts, and elk readily learn to take advantage of that safety. If bowhunters have no opportunity to access hunting on private property so we can be part of the solution to dislocation, there is certainly no percentage in it for us to have our opportunities on public lands restricted!

The second major impact from the ranchers results from their grazing of cattle on public lands. By late summer (about the same time as archery season opens), many areas of public land have been grazed so extensively and hard that game animals, especially elk, have to look elsewhere for food enough to survive. In the public land portion of the Northside unit where I've hunted fairly regularly over the years, about 2/3 of the available area has been grazed so heavily before the first bowhunters arrive each year that elk are few and far between because they've already moved to areas, often private ranchlands, where they can find adequate food. And, that's not to even mention the extensive damage done to riparian areas, springs, wetlands, etc., by cattle.

In my opinion, another major factor in the dislocation of elk to private property, especially in the John Day Valley area, is ODFW's management of antlerless (either-sex) hunting opportunity during archery seasons. Because ODFW tied disabled hunting bag limits to archery bag limits following the 2005 ARC process and essentially implemented an all or nothing approach to bowhunters' antlerless opportunity, they completely unbalanced where bowhunting activity historically took place. In the 10 years from 2003 to

2012, bowhunting effort in the Northside, Murderers Creek, Malheur River and Silvies units where a general either-sex opportunity continued grew by some 45% while bowhunting effort in eastern Oregon as a whole only grew by about 7% during the same period. Essentially, ODFW's management scheme caused more and more bowhunters to do their hunting in smaller and smaller geographic areas. Who wouldn't expect the greatly added hunting pressure in some units resulting from ODFW's management choice to have had an impact?

Finally, it should be instructive for the advisory committee to review the situation in the Ochoco unit. ODFW cut archery elk hunting opportunity in the Ochoco unit by 60 percent or more beginning in 2005; that reduction continues today. (NOTE: the reduction in bowhunting opportunity was supposedly done because of dislocation of elk to private property although the local ODFW biologist reportedly indicated in private that he knew that limiting bowhunting wouldn't address the problem and basically pursued it just to appease ranchers and mess with bowhunters. Doesn't that sound like the same situation we're facing today in other areas?) The fact is that controlling (restricting) bowhunting has been in place in the Ochoco unit for 10 or 11 seasons now while none of the other causes of dislocation have been addressed, and I don't believe that elk dislocation has been impacted favorably even one little bit. In very recent times, ODFW has substantially restricted antlerless elk harvest on public lands in the Ochoco unit because the animals are largely on private property even after 10 +/- years of restricting bowhunting opportunity as the "solution" to the problem.

If the new advisory committee is just another effort to restrict bowhunting on public lands without addressing the many other factors associated with game animal dislocation, this effort, too, will likely lead nowhere and certainly not to a real solution to the problem!

MY STORY

By Craig STARR

Most of my earliest memories involve hunting or fishing with my dad, my maternal granddad and a younger brother, Dennis. From the time Den and I were old enough for our first BB guns, we were out in the woods and fields looking for “game” to harvest.

Although I fooled around with a recurve bow as a young man, I was most notable for an almost complete lack of success with it. Even so, I do remember one occasion when I bagged a Cottontail rabbit that my college roommate and I cooked in our OSU dorm room for a Sunday dinner. While cooking in the dorm rooms wasn't allowed, the dorm cafeteria didn't serve a Sunday dinner so what were hungry growing “boys” to do – starve??

I hunted exclusively with firearms (rifles, shotguns and muzzleloaders) for most of my adult life. However, after retiring from my work life, I went along on a few bowhunting outings with my son-in-law, Allan Sanford, OBH's Central District Committeeman. On one memorable late-season hunt, I rattled up several Blacktail bucks. Although Allan never even got a shot, I decided it was so much fun that I needed to “get in the game” myself! A year later, using an older PSE compound bow inherited from my brother Den who had passed away some years earlier, I took my first big game animal (a Blacktail doe) with a bow and arrow. As they say, the rest is history and I haven't used a firearm for



big game hunting since making that initial transition back to bowhunting!

I have had the honor to serve OBH in a couple of different roles in the last few years. First, I was selected to serve as OBH's interim President a few years ago. Becoming OBH President with no prior organizational involvement in OBH other than a general membership was a real case of “culture shock”!! Although I ran for and was elected to another term as OBH President, it was clear to me (and, probably, everyone else) that the position really wasn't for me. I liken my experience being OBH President to trying to herd cats!!

After deciding not to run for a second elected term as OBH President, I ran for and was elected to my current position as 2nd VP for Bowhunting and Legislation.

I have found that position much more to my liking. Much of my OBH responsibility involves working with (or too often against) ODFW on regulatory issues involving bowhunting, especially trying to maintain reasonable bowhunting opportunities in the face of seemingly continual, but ill-conceived efforts to curtail them. Every now and then, we are able to get something meaningful done, like legalization of lighted nocks for the 2016 seasons, and our efforts pay off for Oregon's bowhunters. On those occasions, it all seems pretty satisfying!

When the Oregon Legislature is in session, I also track bills that could impact bowhunting and testify on them when necessary. In the last few sessions, including the 2015 session, my most significant, although so far unsuccessful effort has been to support legislation restoring effective management of cougars in Oregon.

In addition to Allan, my bowhunting partners now include my son, Delbert, who started bowhunting about the same time I got back into it. My grandson, Bodie, has gone along on a few hunting trips and will likely be joining us as a regular in our hunting camp in the next year or so. And, I have some great-grandsons coming up who may also “catch the bug” as they get older. That's why I think it's important for all of us to give back to OBH – to try to insure that bowhunting opportunities continue to be available for our following generations!!

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CLOSER OF THE DEAL

■ **Becky WILSON**
(Based on interview with Verlyn Savage)

Many bow hunters in eastern Oregon are familiar with the name Verlyn Savage, a name that comes up frequently in discussions of accomplished hunters, knowledgeable hunters, extreme hunters, highly successful hunters. The brag board at a local archery shop displays many of his photos; locals find his hunting stories and techniques fascinating. Last July during Saturday evening of the OBH 3D Shoot in La Grande, Verlyn presented a seminar for many gathered at a local shop to enjoy his talk titled **Closing the Deal**.

Verlyn Savage, born and raised in Wyoming, has lived in La Grande for the past 20 years. He is sole proprietor of a dry wall business and spent the last seven years pastoring a church in Baker City but recently gave up that position. Like many archers, he has hunted for his entire life but started bow hunting at 14, 40 years ago. It is his skill and success in the realm of archery for which he is best known. In 2010 he was forced to switch from right hand to left hand due to a shoulder injury and was successful hunting that year. In 2011 he switched back to his right hand with a new bow but continued to shoot with both hands, just in case. In 2014 he decided to hunt again left-handed and shot a six point bull and a mule deer the same day.

Since 1999 Verlyn has killed a bull every year, with the exception of 2001. He admits to being an unabashed trophy hunter but stresses that he uses every bit of the meat. He works very hard to get to the areas where the big bulls are. When asked to describe his hunting style, he said, "I like to work hard at hunting. When I get done with my hunt, I like to feel I have earned that animal. I go where most hunters don't go without horses. The extreme part is going where others don't go, backpacking in a few miles, not following trails, just through the wilderness. It is a sparse camp, packed in on a backpack to spend a week at a time



- hard work – especially after getting an animal." He shared an experience hunting in Idaho near Sun Valley, hiking five miles in to a base camp, then hunting at about 10,000 feet of elevation. Even in September he might wake up to snow while spending nights in a Bivy sack - out in the morning before light and back after dark with wolves howling in the background.

Verlyn credits his friend Tim Wilcox for teaching him to trophy hunt, waiting for the one you want. With Tim's guidance it became more for the experience and less about the kill. At times, though, he does hunt by himself. He lets someone know the general area he is in and takes precautions because of the inherent dangers.

His scariest experience was in his early 20s, hunting in Wyoming; his life was threatened by hypothermia when he ended up being out much longer than planned in inclement weather. He says that was a life changing experience, learning the critical importance of being prepared for anything. He learned to buy the gear needed; don't go cheap. "Those

\$300 boots could save your life."

When asked about regrets he has from his years of hunting, he responded, "No regrets." He emphasizes ethical hunting and takes pride in seeing that sense of ethics in his son Nathaniell. He disapproves of hunters taking head on shots, instead of waiting for a surer shot, or taking too long of a shot. One of the frustrations in Oregon, according to Verlyn, is people grabbing a bow and going archery hunting because they did not draw a rifle tag. This leads to bad shots, wounded animals, and poor hunting ethics. "Archery is a skill set, paying attention to small things," he said, "talking to the animals, listening to them, knowing where to move, and when ..."

Verlyn is one tough guy, as seen in one of his own stories: "In the spring of 2006, I fell from scaffolding and broke my neck and ribs. Doctors said bow hunting was not an option that year due to the strain it puts on the neck when drawing a bow. My surgery was July 3; by August 3, I just HAD to try it so I grabbed my bow off the shelf and drew it back real careful; I got it back to full draw with just a little bit of

pain; the bad thing was that now I had to let it down... yeah, as soon as the valley was gone, so was my strength. It ripped my two hands together so fast I thought I had re-broken my neck. It laid me out on the floor in a cold sweat. Two days later I took it outside, put an arrow in, drew back and let'er fly...much better. The next month I hunted Oregon and filled my tag with a nice bull and felt I could do Idaho's back country." And so off to Idaho Verlyn went with his friend Kerry Tweit.

"Kerry Tweit and I went deep into the wild country, about 10,000 feet elevation. We set up a base camp about four miles in, all packed on our backs. The second day we got weather that would stick around for a while. We woke up in the morning to 6-8 inches of heavy snow. What a day that turned out to be. Elk were bugling and headed up, up and away, so that is where we went. We caught up to them just before what we call the box canyon. The elk split up, so Kerry and I did too. The elk circled up to the rim tops. As I

was trying to get to the top before they did, I saw a small herd of elk heading my



way, surprisingly, all small bulls. As they mingled and passed me at 3-40 yards, they were all mewing like a herd of cows.

Suddenly, I heard a thundering noise coming like a freight train through the woods; with a sound I have never heard an elk make before, he let out a Woof sound. The smaller bulls dispersed, tails between their legs. His fatal mistake was he had no idea I was 30 yards away at full draw as he came to a stop, his head behind a tree and ALL his vitals broadside to me. With the squeeze of the trigger release, he was mine. I have never followed a brighter blood trail as he spun, leaving buckets of blood in the snow. I am reminded on every hunt how blessed I am to still be able to do this. At 54 years old, two knee surgeries, an intense neck surgery and lots of physical therapy, I still love this game."

Verlyn recently became a pro staff shooter for Prime. His new bow is a Rival; he can't wait to get it broken in on the 2016 hunt. He also offers great thanks to **Alpine Archery and Fly** of La Grande for all the support offered along the way, as well as working with him in all of his hunting endeavors.

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came over the fence cautiously checking for danger. I stealthily squeezed my rangefinder button on the buck's head, 55 yards. I hoped I was looking at the same buck that had been in front. Yes or no, I decided he would be my best chance, and became my target. With graceful ease he bounded the fence, then the ditch, and began angling into the hay field where I prayed he would stop. As I came to full draw, I noticed the rack of a smaller buck crossing the fence. Suddenly, the big buck stopped to graze broadside! I knew he had stepped to 60 yards; this was a challenging shot. I mentally made myself slow down, as I took extra care to check my bubble, pick a spot, and settle the pin. With that the arrow left my bow, and quickly found a vital mark.

He spun and froze, then hobbled back towards the fence with a growing wet spot where my arrow had passed through. I watched from 115 yards as he bedded by the fence, unable to cross. Inquisitively checking his condition, the other bucks decided to slip out quietly. Keeping a wary eye on them, I attempted to text my family with uncontrollably shaky hands while the bucks stalked past me less than 30 yards away. With fading light, the sound of splashing in the ditch told me my buck had expired. Soon holding my first archery buck with my wife Casey and our new baby Paxton, I could not have been more satisfied with life in that moment.

I would like to thank the Oregon Bow Hunters for helping me prepare for this hunt through the

opportunities found in our state triple-crown tournaments. I believe they can help better any archery hunter. Tournaments, like hunting, are very goal-oriented and therefore drive us to practice. The Indoor rounds allow us the chance to focus on equipment tuning, consistent shooting form, and mental toughness. The Field round teaches us to apply these outdoors, and builds confidence in our ability to shoot at challenging angles and longer distances. Finally, the state 3-D puts us into bow hunting scenarios where yardage estimation and the ability to pick a vital spot become paramount! I was blessed with a successful tournament and hunting year and am excited about the friends I found along the way.

HUNT FOR BULL MOOSE IN ALASKA

Former Oregon resident Don Poole, past president and life member of OBH, has relocated to Alaska and is putting together a week-long fly-in moose hunt for September of 2016 to a special area of western Alaska for interested hunters. Moose populations in western Alaska are increasing. A hunter can also take a black bear.

Don originally put together a similar caribou hunt in 2006 for OBH and OHA and was overwhelmed with 23 hunters going. He organized it so gun hunters hunted together, and bow hunters hunted from another camp. There were only four hunters per camp so no one was crowded. Almost everyone got caribou bulls, even though caribou numbers were decreasing.

This hunt will be for bull moose during the rut, and there will be an evening of moose calling and stories



prior to flying out the next morning. Poole commented that he is very excited about this new area.

The cost of the hunt is \$3500, plus commercial airfare, gear, food, license and harvest tags. No deposit needed until April. A gun or bow hunter in Alaska can take one bull moose of 50" antler spread or

larger, and it is not unreasonable for a dedicated hunter to see a few big bulls per day. Organizing travel details, food and gear lists will be provided to make this the hunt of a lifetime.

Contact Don Poole at (503) 884-8197 or by email at dlpooleplpoole@gmail.com.



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The Switch

Continued from page 9

mine was a quickly growing cataract. August 18, 2015, was the earliest I could schedule with the surgery center. Eight days later I was on my way to elk camp ready to hunt. My vision had improved but was not what I had hoped and prayed for.

Having no opportunity to test my prowess during the early bow season, I would have to keep practicing and wait until my antlerless tag could be filled. By now I felt confident that I could and would make the shot when it was presented. Shooting this bow was now not only comfortable; it was beginning to feel natural.

Four bareheaded deer walked beneath my stand at 8:41 A.M. on October 29, 2015. The largest doe had twin buck fawns so she got a pass. A second doe was tagging along. It took almost ten minutes for her to give me the shot I wanted. She was broadside, less than 15 yards. Drawing the bow

felt smooth and effortless. The sights seemed to line themselves up without help from me. At the release the arrow found its mark, passing through one lung and her heart. She was down in less than ten seconds, dropping in sight of my stand. The switch was complete. The arrival of late archery season found me in the same stand from which I shot the doe. Eleven days in a row I was in that stand for at least several hours. Finally, a mature buck made the mistake of walking beneath my stand, and I was able to make a lethal shot - two-for-two shooting left-handed.

Many times I have been told what others would or would not do in my position. One friend mentioned he would rather be blind than see a 'knife' coming toward his eye. Others said they could never shoot left-handed; they are just "too right-handed" to switch. I tend to take these comments

with the proverbial grain of salt. I think nearly any person would choose to see even if it means surgery, and nearly any archer would choose to continue shooting arrows if it was as simple as learning from the other side. It just isn't that hard, and the rewards are amazing.

Perhaps the most important thing about this process has been learning what trusting in God will do for me. Even when things seemed terrible, circumstances were used by God to help me grow and learn new lessons. For this reason I consider myself incredibly blessed, but not because I have suffered so much. I have no reason to feel that I have been singled out or that my problems are greater than those faced by nearly everyone walking on the earth. God has given me much more than I deserve. The sport of bow hunting is just a part of His great blessing.



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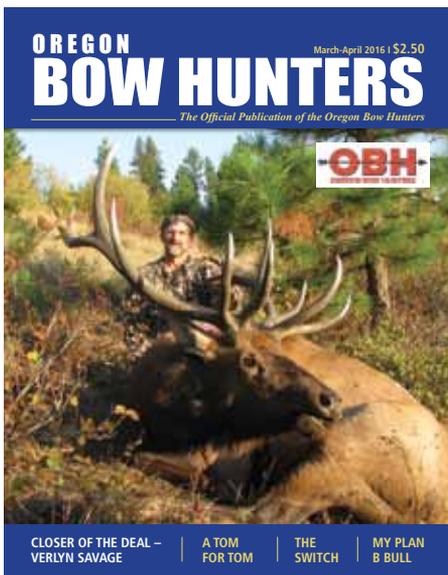
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MAIL TO: Oregon Bow Hunters, 61535 S. Hwy. 97, Suite 5-307, Bend OR 97702



UPDATED WRITER'S GUIDELINES

- Looking for stories related to hunting & archery, especially related to OBH members
- Entries should be between 500 & 750 words (some flexibility on this)
- Submit word processed document, email preferred
- Letters to Editor – no more than 250 words
- Photographs – clear and crisp, high definition; may send hard copy; electronic copy preferred
- Include brief biography of author
- Send to the following:

Becky Wilson, Editor,
Oregon Bowhunter Magazine
61471 Eagle Dr.
La Grande, OR 97850
Email – wilsbecky@gmail.com

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

First off, thank you for stepping up to take Jack's place as our editor. He did a great job for many years and deserves to be able to spend more time hunting and less time on the computer. In your Jan. /Feb. editorial you couldn't have described our elk hunting camp any better, even if you had been going there with us for the last 35 years, as some of us have. Although I hunt mostly alone in a tree stand, the highlight of my day is coming back to camp just to see how everyone else fared during the day, hoping to become a packer for someone in camp. I own a small archery shop in rural southern Oregon (Prospect), and most of my customers end up becoming good friends, as well, due to our shared passion. This year, even with over 20 hunters in and out of our camp

during the season, due to drought conditions and an influx of hunters displaced by the many fires in the vicinity, we collectively tagged three bucks, one bear and one elk. The elk was as good as it gets, a spike bull taken by one of our crew on his 75th birthday! Needless to say, everyone in camp wanted to be part of that pack out. At the other end of the generational spectrum, my 15-year-old grandson took his first archery deer, a nice forked horn. With that age variation, our camp will hopefully survive and thrive for many years after the older members have hung up our bows.

Dennis O'Connor
Skookum Ridge
Bowhunting Supply
Prospect, Oregon

Dear OBH Membership,

I would like to thank ALL the clubs and shops that helped with our Petition Drives to legalize Lighted Nocks. Also, a Big Thank You to OHA for stepping up to help us out. It has been a frustrating four years sending out and gathering petitions to take to the Big Game hearing, only to not have them pass until 2015. Also, thank you to our Fish and Wildlife Commissioners for passing this change.

There will probably be an Anti-Trapping Initiative on the ballot for 2016. If it passes, our deer herds will be one of the animals to suffer the consequences. If you think the count is low now, you won't like it if this passes.

John Stone
OBH Life Member

Dear Oregon Bowhunters Assoc.,

The Letter to the Editor answer given to Mark Childers was pretty good but didn't go far enough on the, "If you want to bow hunt with your daughter, use a draw loc." This should have included that in order to use a draw loc, one must apply for and receive a permit from ODFW and that qualifying for such a permit is very similar to the application for a Disabled Hunting and Fishing Permit. The application must be signed by a doctor. You may wish to investigate this issue with ODFW. I'm pretty sure that just being young and unable to use a 40 lb. bow for deer and a 50lb. bow for elk doesn't meet the definition required by the

disabilities permit. I'm just worried that Mark Childers may go out and purchase a draw loc and could get his daughter a citation for using it without a special permit. I didn't see his letter to the editor so don't have all the information about his daughter, whether she is disabled, age, etc. So if I'm out of line with my comments, I'm truly sorry. In a way, though, I think the answer should have contained just a bit more information about those eligible for using draw locs. My \$.02 worth ...

Stan Porter
OBH Member
P.S. How come our OBH cards don't have member ID #s?



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