

Urban animals on the loose

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Most of North Clackamas is fenced, populated, predominately urban and generally hooked up to sewer lines. So you don't have to deal with feral or loose animals, right? Wrong.

Anyone who's lived in this area for any length of time knows how frequently fauna on the lam end up in police reports, as the subject of water-cooler discussions, and on people's own front lawns.

Even within Portland, coyotes are frequently seen running through the central city. The 1,000-pound bull that wandered through Oregon City garnered headlines earlier this year, and a garbage-truck driver for B&B Leasing is credited as the matador who got the bull under control.



by: PHOTO BY: RAYMOND RENDLEMAN - Joveon Wallace and Hannah Fullerton show off their horse, Maya, who pastures within Milwaukie city limits near the Springwater Corridor between Portland and Gresham.

Logan Taliaferro, who grew up in Oregon City and recently moved to Molalla, deals frequently with loose dogs and horses, but he got a new experience in July. He was on his garbage route on South Morton Road off of Holly Lane when he saw the bull looking directly at a child playing in the street.

"The bull wasn't acting aggressive, but from what I hear, they can maul a person," Taliaferro recalled. "I yelled at the bull 'Hey, hey, hey,' and then I waved at the kid to go."

Cheryl Burks, a neighbor who helped corral the animal once Taliaferro shoed it into a garden, recognized the bull as part of a larger pattern in Clackamas County.

"It seems every few years our little Morton Road neighborhood has a stray, large animal on the loose," Burks said.

A couple years ago, that animal was a not-so-miniature pot-bellied pig. Burks initially got a call from her "bottom of the hill neighbors" inquiring whether she or the neighbors across the road had a pig that was "freaking out" their pasture-grazing llamas.

Neighbors made the "usual calls" to Clackamas County Animal Control, Clackamas County Sheriff's Office, the Oregon Department of Fish & Game, but they found that no one had authority or obligation to deal with the pig.

During the two or three days that the pig continued to make itself at home in the neighborhood, a pot-bellied-pig rescue group promised to come and pick up the pig after it was captured and confined.

Burks spotted the pig a few times in her yard, but failed to entice it into a large dog kennel. Then her neighbor called to say the pig had returned to the bottom of her pasture to terrify the llamas, and requested her help with the pig "roundup."

"I believe we somehow enlisted four people to help with the operation, which involved an intricate, patched-together system of fences and people creating a pathway/blockade forcing the pig into one of the sheds," Burks said. "After much coordination of effort, waving of arms, running about, calling, 'Here piggy, piggy, piggy,' we did manage to confine the critter."

Unfortunately, the rescue group couldn't pick the pig up that day.

"So the pig was fed and watered a number of times, and although we felt all exits had been secured, the morning the pig was to be rescued, no pig!" Burks said.

Rescuers drove away empty-handed, and the pig was not seen in the neighborhood again. Burks believes the pig found its way home, found a new home, or met up with some serious trouble in the woods — coyotes, or maybe became entangled in blackberry brambles and starved.

Animal yarns

A 30-year resident of Morton Road, Burks' yard also has hosted a wandering herd of horses, a single stray horse, and a small roaming steer. The steer lived in the nearby woods for about a year before its butchered remains were found. People with butchering tools took the best meat and left the carcass in the pasture.

The herd of four horses had moved with their owner from Holly Lane to a place about four miles away on Redland Road and evidently had returned for a visit in their old neighborhood.

"The sheriff (deputy) had herded them into my yard with his patrol car, and we were able to entice them into the corral with a bit of grain," Burks recalled. "Mind you, that adventure took place before 6 a.m. What a surprise to open my eyes, look out the window, and see horses in my front yard."

Rodger Huffman, manager of the Oregon Department of Agriculture's animal identification program, recommends people contact the loose livestock's owner if its identity is known. Civil and criminal courts can address more frequent problems.

If the owner is not known, contact Huffman's office so that a brand inspector can help identify ownership.

"When possible, the animals should be contained by the property owner. We aren't in the business of rounding up livestock, but we can help determine ownership and will help people resolve the issue," Huffman said. "Realize that animals will sometimes end up where they shouldn't be. It is not unlawful to chase them off your property, but it is unlawful to cause them harm."

Local stories abound regarding people trying to coax animals to do what they want them to do. It's so common that the bull story inspired neighbor Jo Becker to conduct a series of classes on animal handling (see below).

Here's another good animal yarn courtesy of TriMet: About 3:20 p.m. on Sept. 24, Sara Lee, a Jack Russell terrier, escaped her backyard and headed for Southeast 32nd Avenue in Milwaukie's Ardenwald neighborhood. At the same time, operator Leanne Terhune was driving a Line 75 bus down 32nd Avenue and had to make a quick stop when the dog darted in front of the bus.

Terhune then looked over and saw Sara Lee's owner, Coral Cox, waving her arms frantically. Seeing the panic in Cox's face and being a dog lover herself — Terhune has two dogs at home in Gladstone — she wanted to help. Terhune watched as every time Cox got close to Sara Lee, the dog would speed away, likely thinking it was a game.

Terhune pulled the bus next to Sara Lee a few blocks later. Opening the door, she tried to coax the dog on board by calling, "Here doggy, doggy. Come on. Come on."

"Surprisingly, it worked," she said.

Pet safety sessions

Jo Becker has scheduled classroom-style sessions on pet safety from 1 to 4:30 p.m. on three consecutive Sundays in November ("OC resident sharing animal-rescue karma," Sept. 18).

You can learn more and register for the free classes at jobecker.weebly.com/aidpresentations.html. They have proved so popular that she had to move them to larger venues:

Nov. 10: "Preparing for Disasters Great & Small: Why & How," Milwaukie Center, 5440 S.E. Kellogg Creek Drive, Milwaukie

Nov. 17: "Animal Handling & Body Language," Milwaukie Center

Nov. 24: "Pet First-Aid," Clackamas Fire District No. 1 Training Center, 16100 S.E. 130th Ave., Clackamas

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