

Commentary... Bull by bull

By Judy Bull
Columnist

• It's one thing when you can no longer swing effortlessly from a jungle gym — or at all — but it's a whole 'nuther thing when the seats of a swing are so uncomfortable that swinging isn't even fun. I first noticed I was getting older when I could no longer hop over fences or swing up on my horse bareback. So far two of the things that bug me the most about getting older are having the TV volume way too loud, and that I will never be skinny again.

• After a friend started up his '15 Jeep from afar and then was able to unlock the doors and turn on the lights while still approaching said Jeep, he gallantly shined his headlights on the door of my old Bronco so I could see to unlock it with a KEY. When I told my good friend Judy Gage this tale, she said, "Well, at least you didn't have to crank it."

• It's always so nice to have the back door open on the first warm days of spring. Not nearly as wintery as most, somehow this winter still seemed especially long. The ads on TV for some of the local retirement / assisted living homes aren't at all encouraging — though, for myself, I have Apartment S222 in mind at Bend Vanilla for when that

season knocks on my door.

• I've enjoyed an unobstructed view of the North Sister out my front window for some 26 years. Soon, though, the new owners of the five acres in front of my view will be building their dream home. I well remember how exciting it was to build my home, so I'm trying not to begrudge them anything. I remind myself what Sally Ray said when she lost her 50-year view of the Three Sisters: "It's all right. I know what they look like."

• When I was still working I got four days off in a row every week. The only thing I didn't like about Central Oregon at that time was that I couldn't drive west for an entire two days; only north, south and east on my days off — two days out and two days back. I enjoy driving so much that I always put the cost of gasoline in the entertainment column of my budget spreadsheet.

• For the past 25 years a gaggle of my girlfriends from grade school, high school, and college gather for a few days every summer to celebrate lives lived and living life. As we tiptoe into our 70s, our numbers have begun to ever-so-slowly fall away, leaving us more grateful than ever to have all grown up together and to get to continue growing up together.



PHOTO BY JODI SCHNEIDER MCNAMEE

Allan Neer with his impressive crystal geodes. Visitors got to explore fascinating geological treasures.

GEM SHOW: Vendors come from all around the region

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the stands, I use anything that washes up on the beach that is unique. I like to use everything that is natural."

Vendor and rock collector Allan Neer likes to go big when he displays his crystal

geodes.

"This is a pretty big citrine crystal geode from Brazil," Neer said as folks looked closer at the warm golden color that seemed to twinkle in the sun. "When you open up a geode ... what's inside is all magical, you just get that thrill of knowing that this has been underground for thousands and thousands of years."

Allan and his wife, Merle,

are the proprietors of Al and Merles' Rock & Gem shop in Corvallis.

"My dad had this shop for over 40 years, and after he passed away 10 years ago I took over," Neer said. "I've been around rocks my whole life."

Any of the vendors at the Sisters Roundup of Gems could tell a similar story of a passion that has become a way of life.

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