



Tales from a  
**Sisters Naturalist**  
by Jim Anderson

**A golden eagle disaster**

Working with golden eagles over these past 50-plus years has been — and continues to be — an adventure, most times glorious, and other times shocking.

Eagles are and always will be a high point of my naturalist experiences, as they have been long before I rolled into Oregon on my Harley in

1951. Back in the mid-'50s I discovered the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service had a gang of trappers who were using a lethal poison known as 1080 to kill predators. It was also killing everything else that got into the bait, eagles included.

That got me started checking predator-control poison stations and, sure enough, I found dead eagles, poisoned by federal trappers while attempting to eliminate coyotes from the face of the earth.

The dead eagles I found near those 1080 poison stations really got me upset. I wrote a letter to the head of U.S. Fish & Wildlife voicing my concern at the U.S. government's role in killing our national bird. Somewhere in my files I have the response: "Dear Mr. Anderson; Thank

you for your concern over eagles; they're shot as a nuisance in Alaska..."

In 1962, I was issued my federal banding permit with special permission to band eagles and other raptors. Both my oldest sons, Dean and Ross, became part of that annual springtime event. As they grew, so did their participation in banding raptors, and by the time they were teenagers we were a team.

The picture below shows one of the lighter moments of banding and handling nestling golden eagles. Dean is demonstrating his crass humor because Ross was the innocent victim of one of the perils of handling nestling eagles; he received a blast of excrement from a full-loaded eagle. Falconers judge the strength of their bird by how far it can squirt waste, a process known as "slicing." Eagles hold the record.

I must admit I laughed right along with Dean. It took a long time, but justice has been handed down.

Just the other day my wife, Sue, and I were checking an eyrie way out in Lake County and discovered three young eagles (a rare occasion, two are the norm), and very close to fledging from the nest.

"Boy," Sue said, "We gotta band those youngsters or they'll be gone."

The next day we returned to the old lava cliffs where the eyrie is located, our climber

L a i n g d o n Schmidt got on his ropes and sent down the first (and largest) of the three young eagles in a special bag that kept the eagle safe in its travels.

I was sitting on a rock when Sue handed me the bag, which I carefully opened, revealing a huge young golden eagle (a female for sure) of approximately six weeks of age, fully feathered and weighing in at about nine pounds, only two weeks from fledging.

I reached into the bag, grasping both wings tightly so the bird could not get a wing loose and injure itself, or knock my head off. Her beautiful head came out of the bag, staring at Sue, who was shooting pictures as fast as her Canon could go. With a lot of effort I lifted the rest of the eagle clear, squeezing her wings tight against her body and being careful to keep the flailing feet and talons away from my legs.

At that moment an event took place that took me back into the 54 long and wonderful years I've been



PHOTO BY JIM ANDERSON

Got ya!

banding eagles. This giant baby looked at Sue and (I think) winked, then hunched up, raised her tail feathers and let 'er rip!

The force of her "slicing" was so strong that when the white, black and other liquid elements hit me I almost fell over. The odor wasn't much, but the content and force was overwhelming. It tore into and all through my shirt, went into my undergarments and then like a hot waterfall, descended into my britches, clear to my socks.

Such are the perils of banding eagles ... and wait till Dean and Ross get their copies of *The Nugget*!



PHOTO BY JIM ANDERSON

Ross took a full load and his brother thought that was pretty funny.

**CUSTOM HOMES • RESIDENTIAL BUILDING PROJECTS**  
Serving the Sisters Area Since 1976

**J.P. Pierce**  
GENERAL CONTRACTING LLC

CCB# 16891  
CCB# 159020

541-549-9764 • [jpierce@bendbroadband.com](mailto:jpierce@bendbroadband.com)

**LIVE UNITED**

**GREAT THINGS HAPPEN WHEN WE LIVE UNITED**

YOUTH are inspired to stay ON TRACK for success  
Babies and young children get off to a GREAT START in life  
People are kept SAFE FROM VIOLENCE AND ABUSE  
Families receive help with BASIC NEEDS like food and shelter

**DONATE. VOLUNTEER. LIVE UNITED.**

United Way  
United Way of Deschutes County  
PO Box 5969, Bend, OR 97708  
[www.facebook.com/liveunitedco](http://www.facebook.com/liveunitedco)

*Your best Saturday morning every day!*

**GOLF HOME 279 • \$369,000**  
MLS #201510953

**GLAZE MEADOW 377 • \$519,000**  
MLS #201604708

**GOLF HOME 278 • \$629,000**  
MLS #201605374



We're your neighbors...

Exclusive onsite Realtor —  
and half of our agents live here!



**Black Butte Ranch**  
THERE IS A PLACE

Don Bowler • Gary Yoder • Dick Howells • Phil Arends • Joe Dye • Carol Dye • Steve Post

Come see us daily at The Ranch, 9 to 5 (adjacent to Lodge Pool Complex)

541-595-3838 The Ranch | 541-549-5555 Sisters | View listings at [blackbutte.com](http://blackbutte.com)  
*Wine & Cheese Open House — every Wednesday evening, 4 to 6!*