

KILLDEER: Mother feigns broken wing as decoy

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from the nest trying her best to get the attention of the person, dog, cat, whatever, all the while extending her “broken” wing and doing her best to convince the intruder she’s about to die and the intruder should follow her. If that strategy doesn’t work, she’ll then put herself in jeopardy by approaching the intruder closer and closer and putting on the broken wing act with even greater drama.

Once, on a warm day when I accidentally disturbed a momma killdeer on her nest, I stuck with her through her whole magnificent routine, slowly walking toward her nest. At that point I was filled with guilt, as she all but threw herself right at me to turn me away from her eggs.

And speaking of eggs, most ground-nester, at least all the plover, eggs are unique in that they have a pointed end. I once asked a young man on an OMSI field trip years ago why that was as we stood looking at them in a nest over near Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. He didn’t hesitate: “There has to be room for the beak.”

Actually the pointed eggs keep the eggs from rolling out of the nest...

Ya’ know, that young man went into OSU wildlife management school when he graduated high school, graduated from OSU and went to work for Idaho Fish and Game, and is now retired. And here I am, headin’ for 90 and I still remember that day.

Riding for a cause

By Kathryn Godsiff
Correspondent

Riding down the horse trails out of Sisters Cow Camp on the first Saturday of June is a tradition some riders won’t miss. Especially when they know that every mile they ride brings much needed and appreciated dollars to St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital, located in Memphis, Tennessee.

This year’s Saddle Up for St. Jude ride was no exception, with between 50 and 60 riders heading out at their own pace on a cool morning to wind their way on a marked trail for either 10 or 13 miles. The trail followed the Metolius-Windigo for a while, then branched off, headed up a ridge and through a cool, grassy forest toward Pole Creek, eventually tying back into the Metolius-Windigo across another ridge with expansive views to the west. When riders got back to camp, hamburgers and homemade cookies were available for purchase. The fellowship around the table was free.

The Central Oregon chapter of Oregon Equestrian Trails organizes the ride. OET is a group of horse people who advocate for responsible trail use, maintain and build

horse camps and maintain multi-use trails. And raise money for worthy causes. For 18 years, Sisters Cow Camp has been the site of the ride. Pat and Rhonda Marquis, and a team of sturdy helpers, have been in charge for 13 years.

St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital was founded in 1962 by entertainer Danny Thomas and from its humble beginnings it now ranks as one of the leading research and treatment hospitals for childhood cancer and other catastrophic diseases of children. The hospital treats all patients at no charge and those patients come from every state and many foreign countries.

“The hospital does great things and has a very high cost to run,” said Pat Marquis.

Requiring over a million dollars a day to operate, it needs every dollar that comes in through fundraising efforts. The Saddle Up for St. Jude events occur across the country and typically are trail rides but can also be horse shows or rodeos. They join a multitude of other sporting events that enhance bequests and other forms of public support.

For the past five years, Saddle Up for St. Jude supporters Zane and Susan Smith



PHOTO PROVIDED

Saddle Up supporters brought a check from the Local 290 Plumbers and Steamfitters Union for St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital.

have brought in a substantial donation from Local 290 Plumbers and Steamfitters Union. This year a check was presented for \$1,000. The Smiths are both retired steamfitters from Terrebonne, and each year submit an application to the charitable fund of Local 290. The application makes its way through the system, eventually being voted on by the union membership.

Pat Marquis recalls that

one time a family arrived at the registration table. They weren’t riding, but had recently lost a child to a childhood disease and wanted to make a donation through a Saddle Up event.

Combining good hearted people, horses, and a beautiful forest ride is an effective way to raise money. Marquis is grateful for the riders who took time to gather sponsors, make donations and ride for a cause.

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