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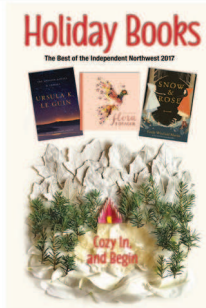
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BUNKHOUSE CHRONICLE



The Mill Party

By Craig Kullman, Columnist

I am sentimental about sawmills. That's especially true around Christmas because the Sierra Pacific sawmill — at one time the second largest of its kind in the United States — was also the principal private employer where I was raised, in the sparsely populated northeast corner of California.

My stepfather worked at Sierra Pacific for over 20 years, rolling logs in the millpond, pulling chain, freezing through graveyard shifts in the stacker house, and finally loading long lines of trucks and boxcars on a forklift. Like every man in that industry, he worked like a Georgia mule, sometimes seven days a week, and never once did anyone hear him complain.

I often wonder what went through his mind on those long, very cold, and chaotic nights in the lumber mill, or the blistering-hot summer days, when just about anyplace on earth probably felt like a better place to be. And I cherish memories of those dark mornings when, as I lay awake in my warm bed, he came home and slipped into the house like a ghost. I would lie in bed and listen as he quietly stoked the woodstove in the living room, so that when we all got up for school the house would still be warm.

Throughout my childhood, our fortunes rose

and fell with the vagaries of the timber industry. There were lean times, when my stepfather would bring home a notice on company letterhead from "Red" Emmerson — who had built a small empire of lumber mills across northern California from the ground up — lamenting with enviable sincerity a series of layoffs.

And those days were made still leaner when the sawmill whistle, which blew every day at noon over the town of Susanville, went terribly and awkwardly silent, and we sat on my mother's bed counting out nickels and pennies to pay for school pictures.

My step-dad would make up the difference by feeding out cattle for our neighbors. He would cross the creek below our place — we lived far out of town — on a slippery old 2 by 12, then walk up the hill to the hay yards where hungry cattle stood covered in ice and bawling, on mornings so cold he had to use a blowtorch to unlock the tractor tires where they had frozen to the ground.

But even in those rougher times there was an abiding sense of local community that bound families together. There was no notion

See THE MILL PARTY on page 21

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No holiday feast is complete without a pie. And Santa Claus has worked hard to earn those Christmas cookies.

Local folks know that Sisters Bakery is the place to go for delectable baked goods — from donuts to pies. And locals aren't the only ones. Many travelers make Sisters Bakery a must-stop on their journey through Central Oregon.

Sisters Bakery is a family business, and the bakers put love into their offerings. You'll find pecan pie, pumpkin pie and many variations on apple pies baked fresh every day. Delight in originals like marionberry pie; raspberry rhubarb and peach. And new family recipes are being added in.

Don't wait to get your holiday orders in — place your order now to ensure that your Christmas table will feature some of the most delicious goodies to be found anywhere.

And by all means, stop in during the busy season for a hot cup of coffee and a roll or donut.



Furry Friends Pet Photos with Santa

It's time for Furry Friends' annual Pet Photos with Santa, Saturday, December 2, at Sisters Art Works at the corner of Ash and Adams. Pets — and sometimes their owners — pose with Santa. There will be hand-drawn personalized ornaments for sale there, too.

The event will be held during the Sisters Art Works Holiday Open House.

Furry Friends is currently accepting donations for their annual pet-food drive, and cash donations are greatly needed to purchase pet food. Donors can also purchase food directly at Sisters Feed Co. and they'll deliver it for you. The annual pet-food distribution, December 16, is in coordination with Sisters Kiwanis and Sisters-Camp Sherman RFPD. The annual drive traditionally feeds approximately 300 pets in the Sisters area.

Donations can still be dropped off at The Nugget office, 442 E. Main Ave., made online at www.furryfriendsfoundation.org, or by mail to P.O. Box 1175, Sisters, OR 97759.



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