

# Crime historian conducts dig for D.B. Cooper case evidence

VANCOUVER, Wash. (AP) — Nearly 50 years after skyjacker D.B. Cooper vanished out the back of a Boeing 727 into freezing Northwest rain — wearing a business suit, a parachute, and a pack with \$200,000 in cash — a crime historian is conducting a dig on the banks of the Columbia River in Vancouver, Washington, in search of evidence.

KOIN reports that Eric Ullis, a self-described expert on the infamous D.B. Cooper case, began a two-day dig on Friday. Ullis and four volunteers are searching for evidence about 10 to 15 yards away from where a boy found \$6,000 of Cooper's ransom money in 1980. Ullis said his theory is that Cooper buried the parachutes, an attaché case and the money at the same time, but dug smaller holes instead of one large one.

The case of Cooper has become infamous, not only in the Pacific Northwest but also in the country. The FBI Seattle field office called the investigation one of the longest and most exhaustive in the agency's history.

On November 24, 1971, the night before Thanksgiving, a man described as being in his mid-40s with dark sunglasses and an olive complexion boarded a flight from Portland to Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (Sea-Tac). He bought his \$20 ticket under the name "Dan Cooper," but an early wire-service report misidentified him as "D.B. Cooper," and the name stuck.

Sitting in the rear of the plane, he handed a note to a flight attendant after takeoff.

"Miss, I have a bomb and would like you to sit by me," it said.

The man demanded \$200,000 in cash plus four parachutes. He received them at Sea-Tac, where he released the 36 passengers and two of the flight attendants. The plane took off again at his direction, heading slowly to Reno, Nevada, at the low height of 10,000 feet. Somewhere, apparently over southwestern Washington, Cooper lowered the aircraft's rear stairs and jumped.

He was never found. But a boy digging on a Columbia River beach in 1980 discovered three bundles of weathered \$20 bills — nearly \$6,000 in all. It was Cooper's cash, according to the serial numbers.

Over the years, the FBI and amateur sleuths have examined innumerable theories about Cooper's identity and fate, from accounts of unexplained wealth to purported discoveries of his parachute to potential matches of the agency's composite sketch of the suspect.

In July 2016, the FBI announced it was no longer investigating the case.

*Editor's note: In 2011, Marla Cooper, who grew up in the Brooks-Scanlon logging camp in the early 1970s, visited town. She had participated in an ABC News interview in which she posited the theory that her uncle Lynn Doyle Cooper of Sisters was the man known as D.B. Cooper. The interview and Cooper's visit sparked a bit of Coopermania in Sisters. Read the story at bit.ly/NuggetCooperCase.*



## In the PINES

By T. Lee Brown

### Where is Sisters Country?

Call it "the Sisters area" or go for "Sisters Country," a successful marketing tagline rolled out by the Sisters Area Chamber of Commerce a while back. I like calling it Sisters Country. Our home. Where we live and work and play. Where the heck is it, exactly?

Bill Bartlett mentioned in last week's issue of *The Nugget* that it might be defined by the borders of Sisters School District. I respectfully disagree. Wherever *The Nugget* covers news and community? That's Sisters Country, and it most definitely includes Camp Sherman, Suttle Lake, and environs. The term Sisters Country is big enough to encompass our neighbors in Jefferson County, zip code

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97730, and Black Butte School District.

Speaking of boundaries: Did you know that Sisters Parks & Recreation District (SPRD) and Sisters School District (SSD) do not share the same borders? Some local parents might not realize that, until they go in to sign up for SPRD camps — only to discover that their family's address is considered part of Redmond's parks and rec. Even if you're an active part of the Sisters community and your kids attend school here, you might not fall under SPRD's rubric. Out-of-district people can still participate; it costs more.

I asked Jennifer Holland, SPRD's executive director, what's up with that. "This is a very common question," she assured me. "Sisters Park & Recreation District is called a 'special district.' We have our own district lines that, while are similar to SSD, are not the same."

Apparently it's often seen in special districts, including the one Holland worked for before moving to Sisters (Willamalane over in Springfield). SPRD's boundaries were determined back in 1998, when the special district formation was on the ballot for voters to approve.

"Many factors go into

deciding the district boundaries including needs for services and who is likely to support the measure," Holland said. "As you know, Central Oregon has changed a lot in the last 20-plus years, so what was true then may not be true today."

To change district lines, SPRD would need to float a ballot measure to "annex" specific areas. Those specific areas would then be subject to SPRD-supporting property taxes. "There have been conversations with myself and the board on the potential need for this, as there are pocket neighborhoods who are in the SSD boundaries but not ours," Holland explained.

"Future steps remain to be seen," she said. "However, I do believe it will be a topic during our next strategic planning process."

The board of SPRD cannot, alas, tell us where exactly Sisters Country is. Maybe we should put that question on the ballot, too. But who would get to vote on it? Only the residents of 97759? Or the wider swath of Sisters Country?

That was a joke, folks. That's not a ballotable issue. So I'll just keep using the term in an inclusive and vague kinda way. Shout-out to my friends in 97730!

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