

GEOCACHING

Continued from Page 1B

Max, as many boys do who are years away from being able to drive, has a sense of curiosity that's both catholic and intense. Just lately his two obsessions — or at least the two that occupy most of his (and his parents') time — are geocaching and microscopes.

He recently acquired a portable microscope that allows him to pursue both interests simultaneously. There is of course an app for geocaching.

Actually there are probably dozens of geocaching apps, but the one Max downloaded onto his mother's phone is the one we employed on the Saturday we drove to Stump Spring Butte.

My initial plan was to hike the road that follows the spine of Windy Ridge toward the Burnt River.

But Max insisted that I check the app for nearby geocaches, and sure enough there was a bright green icon on Stump Spring Butte, less than a mile from Windy Ridge.

Much too close, and convenient, to bypass, in other words.

We headed to the butte first.

I had climbed to the top, where a fire lookout once stood, but that was years before the Cornet-Windy Ridge fire swept through in August 2015.

The fire, and subsequent salvage logging, had so changed the landscape that I scarcely recognized the area. Or at least that was my excuse when I drove past an important junction and Lisa had to set me straight by consulting the geocache app, which also has a detailed map showing roads.

A road gets to within a half-mile or so of the summit, so it didn't take us long to reach the boulders and start looking for what the geocache's



Lisa Britton /For the EO Media Group

Heartleaf arnica's blossoms brighten fire-blackened forests.

creator described as a "camo lock-box."

I was a trifle worried by the "camo" part, what with the purpose of camouflage being to make sure something is not found.

Nor was I encouraged by the lack of specificity in the ostensible location of the geocache.

It was described as being "near" the site of the lookout but that was no help at all because there's nothing — no crumbling foundation blocks, no weathered boards — to indicate where the building stood.

Ray Kressek, who wrote a fine book about fire lookouts in Oregon and Washington, determined through his research that the 32-foot tower on the butte was built in 1934 and "destroyed" in 1963.

I can't say how thorough those assigned the destruction were in their efforts, but it appears that any recognizable remnants which might have survived the 1963 purge were done for by the flames of 2015.

(The geocache, according to the app, had been placed since the blaze.)

The rock formations that comprise the butte's high point, although interesting to look at, are lousy with cunning hiding places.

Some of these crevices are the



Olivia Jacoby /For the EO Media Group

Larkspur

sort that, when you've wedged most of your upper body into them, can induce claustrophobia. It's all too easy to imagine one stone shifting a few inches, leaving you in a painful and precarious position and pondering how easy it might be to amputate your arm with a pocketknife.

All four of us combed the plateau, fanning out from the spot where Lisa's phone said the cache ought to be.

Max's disappointment was degrading into despondency. I tried to console him, noting that we had made a thorough search and anyhow maybe somebody stole the cache.

He didn't seem mollified but he did take the lead on the hike back to the rig, stomping through the woods.

Within a half hour or so Max's mood had improved — a 9-year-old's attitude being as unpredictable as the waves in an unsettled sea.

It helped that he had the foresight to step outside the car before twisting the cap on his bottle of Sprite, which, agitated by the decrepit roads, fountained a fan of lemon-lime foam.

His sister, however, uncapped her bottle while we were driving, with predictably sticky results and the sort of gloating opportunity that younger brothers crave.

We had a nice hike out Windy Ridge for a couple miles, reveling in the expansive views of the Burnt River Canyon and exclaiming with delight when Max spotted the

distinct and beautiful blossom of the bitterroot.

The next day we drove out to Sumpter Valley and then up into the Elkhorns, our destination the lime quarry along Baboon Creek.

This is a fascinating place to visit even when you're not looking for a geocache.

The Blue Mountain Lime Company gouged the slopes between 1963 and 1971, according to a report from the Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries on the state's limestone deposits.

The Baboon Creek quarry was the second the company mined in the Elkhorns. The first site, on Marble Creek on the east side of the range, opened in 1958.

The rock was processed into industrial lime at a plant about 5 miles north of Baker City, south of Wingville Lane and just west of the railroad tracks. The plant closed more than 40 years ago but snowy-white piles of lime remain — they're quite distinctive even from the summit of Elkhorn Peak, more than 5,500 feet above.

Although limestone mining ceased long ago, the benefits of Blue Mountain Lime's operation remain. The company was responsible for building the road that crosses the Elkhorns at Marble Creek Pass, the southern terminus of the Elkhorn Crest National Recreation Trail and one of just two roads — the other being the Elkhorn Drive Scenic Byway — that cross the spine of the range.

The road was a haul route for limestone trucks bringing rock from the Baboon Creek quarry over the Elkhorns and down Marble Creek to the processing plant.

I'm not sure Max cared much about this history.

But he was awfully interested in the geocache that the app told us was located near the top of the quarry.

Lisa and I were leery, fearing a repeat of the previous day's failure. We needn't have worried.

The cache — a plastic container — was conspicuously placed against the base of a fir.

Max dug into the contents, an eclectic mix that included a couple of granola bars, a handwarmer and a candy ring pop that Olivia dearly wanted to take.

We poked around on the wide, flat terraces the miners hacked into the hillside. The quarry, never patented, is public land.

It's an intriguing part of Baker County's mining history — in part because it's comparatively recent. And because the nature of mining limestone is quite different from tunneling into the ground to intercept a vein of gold that might be only a foot wide the quarry, which extends for several hundred vertical feet and even more width, is considerably more prominent than a lode mine, many of which have caved in at the entrance anyway. Mining limestone economically requires both quantity as well as quality.

The Baboon Creek quarry is visible from miles away, a blatant patch among the dark green forests, sometimes gray and sometimes nearly white depending on the perspective and the angle of the sunlight.

We'll likely be out this weekend, chasing the snow as it recedes up the mountains.

(Although the storm earlier this week at least temporarily reversed that seasonal shift — about a foot of snow fell in parts of the Wallows and Elkhorns.)

Wherever we go I'm certain of one thing.

Max will make sure the app is up and running, luring us to another green icon on the word of someone we've never met and probably never will.

Published by The Observer & Baker City Herald - Serving Wallowa, Union and Baker Counties

CLASSIFIEDS

PLACING YOUR AD IS EASY...Union, Wallowa, and Baker Counties

Phone La Grande - 541-963-3161 • Baker City - 541-523-3673

On-Line: www.lagrandeobserver.com
www.bakercityherald.com

Email: Classifieds@lagrandeobserver.com
Classifieds@bakercityherald.com

Fax: La Grande - 541-963-3674
 Baker City - 541-523-6426

DEADLINES:
 LINE ADS:
 Monday: noon Friday
 Wednesday: noon Tuesday
 Friday: noon Thursday
 DISPLAY ADS:
 2 Days Prior to
 Publication Date

110 Announcements

LOOK HERE!

You too can use this **ATTENTION GETTER!** Ask how you can get your ad to stand out like this!

CHECK YOUR AD ON THE FIRST DAY OF PUBLICATION

We make every effort to avoid errors, however mistakes do slip through.

PLEASE check your ad(s) the first day of publication and call us immediately if you find an error. Northeast Oregon Classifieds will cheerfully make your correction & extend your ad 1 day

★ ★ ★ ★

THE DEADLINE for placing a **CLASSIFIED AD** is 11:00 A.M. **ONE BUSINESS DAY BEFORE PUBLICATION**

Publication Days:
 Tuesdays
 Thursdays
 Saturdays

RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE CHARITIES IDAHO

PULL TABS ACCEPTED

AT THE FOLLOWING BAKER CITY LOCATIONS

- Baker City Herald
- Dollar Tree
- Black's Distributing
- Ryder Bros
- VFW
- Baker Elk's Lodge
- Main Event
- Lefty's Tap House
- Little Bagel Shop
- Baker City Fire Dept.
- Haines Sell-Rite
- Idle Hour
- Salvation Army

GET QUICK CASH WITH THE CLASSIFIEDS!

Sell your unwanted car, property and household items more quickly and affordably with the classifieds. Just call us today to place your ad and get ready to start counting your cash. The Observer 541-963-3161. The Baker City Herald 541-523-3673

114 Self-Help Group Meetings

WALLOWA COUNTY AA MEETINGS

Enterprise

MONDAYS

- Enterprise Group 7:00 pm 113.5 E Main St.

TUESDAYS

- Enterprise Group 12 - 1:00 pm 113.5 E Main St.
- Enterprise Group 7 - 8:00 pm (Big Bk Study) 113.5 E Main St.

WEDNESDAYS

- Enterprise Group 7:00 pm 113.5 E Main St.

THURSDAYS

- Enterprise Group 12 - 1:00 pm 113.5 E Main St.
- All Saints (Mens Mtg) 7:00 pm 113.5 E Main St.
- Grapevine Meeting 301 S. Lake; 5:30 pm

FRIDAYS

- Enterprise Group 7:00 pm 113.5 E Main St.

SATURDAYS

- Enterprise Group 7:00 pm 113.5 E Main St.

City of Joseph

MONDAYS

- Grace and Dignity (Womans Mtg) Joseph United Methodist Church; 6:00 pm 301 S. Lake St, Corner 3rd & Lake/Side Stairs, Lake St

WEDNESDAYS

- Grace and Dignity (Womans Mtg) 12 pm 301 S. Lake St., Church Basement

City of Wallowa

SUNDAYS

- Church of Christ 504 w. 2nd St.; 5:00 pm

SATURDAYS

- Church of Christ 504 w. 2nd St.; 12:00 pm

Questions call AA Hotline: 541-624-5117 www.oregonaadistrict29.org

114 Self-Help Group Meetings

AA HOTLINE
 Questions: Call 541-624-5117 www.oregonaadistrict29.org

AL-ANON, Cove. Keep coming back. Mondays, 7-8pm. Calvary Baptist Church. 707 Main, Cove.

AA MEETINGS
 Wednesday Nights, 7-8:15pm. Fort Union Grange Hall, corner of McAlister & Gekeler Lanes. For more info, call 541-786-1222

Call 541-963-3161 or 541-523-3673 to place your ad.

AL-ANON Attitude of Gratitude. Wednesdays, 12:15-1:30pm. Faith Lutheran Church. 12th & Gekeler, La Grande. 541-786-2051

Drug Problem? We can help!
 Narcotics Anonymous Phone: 541-805-2229 www.neo-na.org

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS:
 Monday, Thursday, & Friday at 8pm. Episcopal Church 2177 First St., Baker City.

DOES EVERYONE KNOW YOUR BUSINESS

Even if you think they do, you'll have to keep reminding them about it.

These little ads really work! Join the thousands of other people in this area who are regular users of the classified. See how simple and effective they can be. We're open from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. for your convenience.

PEOPLE READ THE CLASSIFIED

You've just proved it to yourself! Remember us when you need efficient, economical advertising.

Classifieds get results.

114 Self-Help Group Meetings

BINGO
 Sunday • 2 pm - 4pm
 St. Frances DeSales Social Hall
 2235 1st St., Baker City
 Info: (541) 523-2114

OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS
 Tues., Noon - 1 PM
 Baker County Library (Archive Room)
 2400 Resort St
 541-540-5326

DO YOU HAVE.... HURTS, HABITS and/or HANG UPS?
 12 Step Biblical Support
 Harvest Church
 3720 Birch St. Baker City
 Thurs., 6:30 - 8:30 PM

LA GRANDE NOW HAS A GAMBLERS ANONYMOUS MEETING!
 Every Friday Night @5pm, 2107 Gekeler Ln, LG, Church of Christ basement. For more info please call 971-219-8411

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS
 Goin' Straight Group Meetings:
 Mon., Tues. Thurs. & Fri. Start at 8 PM
 Episcopal Church Basement
 2177 1st Street, Baker City

PEOPLE with PARKINSON'S
 Caregivers, Family, Friends **SUPPORT GROUP**
 Contact Judith at 208-855-9199
 Meetings resume @GRH when restrictions ease.

AA MEETING: Survivor Group.
 Mon., Wed. & Thurs. 12:05 pm-1:05 pm.
 Presbyterian Church, 1995 4th St. (4th & Court Sts.) Baker City.
 Open, No smoking.

AL-ANON FAMILY GROUP
 (support for family & friends of Alcoholics)
 Tuesday evenings
 Joseph Methodist Church (basement on northside)
 Joseph, OR
 6-7pm. Contact 541-398-1398

ALZHEIMERS-DEMENCIA
 Support Group meeting
2nd Friday of every mo.
 11:30 am to 1:00 pm.
 1250 Hughes Lane Baker City
 Church of the Nazarene (In the Fellowship Hall)
 541-523-9845

OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS NEW MEETING ROOM!
 Community Connections
 2810 Cedar St. • Baker City
 Enter room from backdoor.
 OA sign in the door window
 Fridays at 8:45 A.M.
 Call 541-523-5128

All Aboard

...to what you need in the classifieds

Baker City Herald

THE OBSERVER