

VOICES

Special moments only happen once, but memories last

By CARLA KELLEY

Special to The Observer

I remember Camp Pine Valley because it was the site of my first kiss, delivered by a sweet nerdy guy named Frank.

He was 12. I was 11 but working hard to look older.

Frank was a skinny guy who wore thick glasses. His real name was Franklin, but at that time in his life he preferred Frank. We both longed to be reading books instead of choosing up ball game teams, but books were in short supply at Camp Pine Valley.

He was not interested in sports, which endeared him to me. I could swim and paddle a canoe, but I couldn't catch or throw a ball or run fast, which guaranteed that I would be chosen last in the frequent team selections endemic to summer camp.

Most of summer camp for me was about these daily rejections and other athletic failures, like my first horseback riding experience when the horse lay down and tried to wipe me off its back. But amidst these juvenile humiliations, Frank picked me to experience a first kiss, his as well as mine.

I recall that he held my hand at campfire sing-a-longs. I felt loved. Suddenly I was not all alone anymore. That was special. That was very special indeed.

After the eight-week summer camp session ended, we campers

ANYONE CAN WRITE

Nearly 40 years in the business have taught me that readers are bombarded and overwhelmed with facts. What we long for, though, is meaning and a connection at a deeper and more universal level.

And that's why The Observer will be running, from time to time, stories from students who are in my writing class, which I've been teaching for the past 10 years in Portland.

I take great satisfaction in helping so-called nonwriters find and write stories from their lives and experiences. They walk into my room believing they don't have what it takes to be a writer. I remind them if they follow their hearts, they will discover they are storytellers.

As we all are at our core.

Some of these stories have nothing to do with La Grande or Union County. They do, however, have everything to do with life.

If you are interested in contacting me to tell me your story, I'd like to hear from you.

Tom Hallman Jr., tbbhbook@aol.com

Tom Hallman Jr. is a Pulitzer Prize-winning feature writer for the Oregonian newspaper. He's also a writing coach and has an affinity for Union County.

left the woods and hills of the Laurentian Mountains and returned to Montreal where most of us lived. Frank and I "dated" a bit after camp, although "dating" is a big word for what we did. We had absolutely no private time together.

A date with Frank meant his father drove him to my house. Frank and I would climb into the back seat of his dad's big sedan and hold hands, while both his parents sat in the front. Then we would all drive to see a movie.

This in itself was exciting: not because Frank was holding my damp hand in his, but because it was illegal for anyone under 16 years of age to attend most movies in the puritanical Quebec Province of 1957. His nice parents would attend the movie with us to bolster the lie about our ages as we bought our entry tickets.

I have no recollection of what movies we saw, but I recall several of these dates. Best of all, I could now brag that I had a boyfriend, which vastly improved my social status. Frank was definitely a good thing in my life in the autumn of 1957.

A few months later, our little romance came to an abrupt end when my father took a new job — in Iowa. In 1958 our nuclear family did what no one in Montreal's close-knit community ever did back then: We moved more than 1,000 miles away from Montreal and all our relatives.

I recall a few letters back and forth between Frank and me, but soon the intervals between them lengthened until the correspondence stopped. Kids our age had no access to expensive long-distance phone calls. Letters written on paper and ink took a long time

to arrive. I got busy adjusting to my American high school and I never saw Frank again.

Or did I?

Flash forward to April 2021. I am living in Portland, Oregon. This is my 11th city since leaving Montreal in 1958, but I have been here 40 years. I moved here in 1980 from city number 10, which was Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. I have a career and a life. Camp Pine Valley is a distant memory; I have to do research to even recall its name.

I'm still in touch with a couple of people who live in Pittsburgh. One is a professor at Carnegie-Mellon University. My friend contacts me when there's news about someone we both knew back in the 1970s. Last April, my professor friend sent me an obituary from a Pittsburgh newspaper. On the same day, I received a second copy of the same obituary, from someone else in Pittsburgh whom I had not seen in decades.

The subject of the obituary was a well-known professor of the history of art and architecture in Pittsburgh. He had degrees from McGill, Oberlin and Harvard. He had published nine books in his field, many of which recorded his findings from excavations of famous cathedral sites in Italy. He had won a Guggenheim Fellowship among other prestigious prizes. He was internationally famous for his writings on archi-

tectural and cultural history. His name was Franklin.

There was nothing in the obituaries about his attendance at Camp Pine Valley, but this was definitely Franklin of the first-ever kiss.

By some trick of memory, I do not recall meeting Frank when we both lived in Pittsburgh in the 1970s. Frank was then a young professor at Carnegie-Mellon University. He was married; I was newly single after a painful divorce. Somehow, 40 years after I left Pittsburgh permanently, both of my friends from the '70s who sent me his obituary retained the memory that I knew Franklin.

Maybe Franklin's name came up when I lived there. Maybe we met, disliked each other and I deleted the meeting from memory. Maybe I met him and told other friends who taught at Carnegie-Mellon about him. Maybe he never forgave me for dropping our teenage correspondence. Any of these scenarios is plausible; I just don't recall.

Thinking about Camp Pine Valley after all these years reminds me that the camp put on a production of "The Wizard of Oz." I was cast as the Tin Man. My solo song was "If I only had a heart."

I hold Franklin's memory dear because his kiss awakened my young heart. That only happens once.

Revamped skate park to open Aug. 7 in Enterprise

By BILL BRADSHAW

Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — The long-awaited revamped Enterprise Skateboard Park will celebrate its grand reopening Saturday, Aug. 7, with new features and a celebrity motivational speaker.

Professional skateboarder and MTV celebrity Brandon Novak will be on hand for the event, according to Ron Pickens, of Enterprise's Alternative

High School and Building Healthy Families.

Pickens, who has been spearheading adding new features to the park, said the opening will be at 10 a.m. Novak, who has earned a reputation both on and off his board, is scheduled to speak from 11 a.m. to noon.

Pickens said just Novak's speech is planned, but "hopefully, Brandon Novak will do a skating demo."

A half-pipe has been

the major addition to the park, although other obstacles have been added or upgraded. Pickens said Monday that the park is not quite complete.

"We're two ramps shy at this point, but we're pretty close," Pickens said.

He said some signs and benches also need to be added and will be done this week.

"If all goes according to plan, the park should be finished by Friday night," he said.

Pickens said artwork designed by some of the girls from the Alternative School has been added.

"It's nice to see a breath of fresh air down there and see some color," he said. "The girls' artwork adds some color and some flair."

The project has been underway since December, when original plans called just for

the addition of a half-pipe. Then, this spring, the project received a surprise anonymous donation of \$51,500. Pickens expanded his plans and with donations from BHF, the city, community groups, private individuals and businesses, they've brought in about \$77,000 and have been able to add to their original plans. Over the

past month and a half, he's been working with the Alternative School kids on benches and signs.

He said the donation dollars do not count toward the cost of donated labor.

"It feels good to see all these pieces get arranged and this project get successfully pulled off," Pickens said.

Notice

Recently, Avista requested a change in natural gas rates for our Oregon customers. We know you care about your energy costs, so we think it's important to share this news with you.

On July 30, 2021, Avista made five annual rate adjustment filings with the Public Utility Commission of Oregon (PUC) that if approved, are designed to increase overall natural gas revenue by approximately \$8.1 million or 7.4% effective Nov. 1, 2021. These filings have no impact on Avista's earnings.

The first rate adjustment is related to Avista's decoupling mechanism. Decoupling is designed to break the link between a utility's revenues and customers' energy usage. Generally, Avista's natural gas revenues are adjusted each month based on the number of customers rather than therms sales. The difference between revenues based on therm sales and revenues based on the number of customers is surcharged or rebated to customers beginning in the following year. If approved, Avista's request is designed to increase overall natural gas revenue by approximately \$2.0 million or 1.8%. This rate adjustment is driven primarily by the expiration of rebates currently being passed through to customers.

The second rate adjustment is the annual Purchased Gas Cost Adjustment (PGA) filing. PGAs are filed each year to balance the actual cost of wholesale natural gas purchased by Avista to serve customers with the amount included in rates. This includes the natural gas commodity cost as well as the cost to transport natural gas on interstate pipelines to Avista's local distribution system. If approved, Avista's natural gas revenues would increase by approximately \$6.1 million or 5.6%. This rate adjustment is driven primarily by wholesale natural gas prices, which are higher than the level presently included in rates. Avista does not profit on the actual natural gas commodity or the costs to transport natural gas to Avista's service territory.

The remaining three miscellaneous adjustments relate to intervenor funding, demand side management program funding, and recovering costs associated with regulatory fees. The combination of those three miscellaneous filings is a decrease in overall natural gas revenue of approximately \$49 thousand or 0.0% effective Nov. 1, 2021.

The bottom line

If all five requests are approved, and you are an Avista natural gas customer using an average of 48 therms per month, you could expect your bill to increase by \$3.15, or 5.1% for a revised monthly bill of \$64.68 beginning Nov. 1, 2021. All other customer groups receiving firm natural gas service from Avista would also see increases.

For more information

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we are unable to provide copies at our office locations as we usually do. However, copies of our filings are available at www.myavista.com/rates or you can call us at 1-800-227-9187.

This announcement is to provide you with general information about Avista's rate request and its effect on customers. The calculations and statements in this announcement are not binding on the PUC. For more information about the filing or for information about the time and place of any hearing, contact the PUC at:

Public Utility Commission of Oregon
201 High Street SE, Ste. 100
Salem, OR 97301
(800) 522-2404, www.puc.state.or.us

This notice contains forward-looking statements regarding the Company's current expectations. Forward-looking statements are all statements other than historical facts. Such statements speak only as of the date of the notice and are subject to a variety of risks and uncertainties, many of which are beyond the Company's control, which could cause actual results to differ materially from the expectations. These risks and uncertainties include, in addition to those discussed herein, all the factors discussed in the Company's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended Dec. 31, 2020 and the Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the quarter ended March 31, 2021.



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