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In town/to town

BY MEG GUSTAFSON



When I come home to the Applegate I am always greeted by the "White Horse of Sterling Creek." He stands majestically at the three-mile marker as a sentry to the gateway of home. One rainy day through the foggy mist I saw his lips move and I heard him say, "Welcome home, Meg." On another rare day as I was heading in "to town," he would not make eye contact with me. I brushed it off originally, but it still unnerved me throughout the day. Rightfully so, I got a speeding ticket and a flat tire. You get the picture; no eye contact from the White Horse means turn around and go home.

As Applegate residents, we have two choices for a response when a friend calls and asks what you have been up to. Choice #1: I have been "in town," spoken with a sense of survival, or Choice #2: "I have to go "to town," murmured with a slight whine.

Every year Merriam-Webster adds about 100 new words to their dictionary. Last year a few of these new words were:

Mouse Potato: a person who spends a great deal of time on the computer

Himbo: an attractive vacuous male

Bahookie: a person's buttocks (I actually think we already have enough words to describe this anatomical landmark.)

So I'd like to nominate a new word for 2009:

In town/to town: a time period (usually unbearably long) doing errands, mundane life duties either looming ahead of you or already accomplished with a serene sense of survival. Origin Applegate Valley, Oregon.

My friend Justin Pereira of Thompson Creek thinks we need to clarify the definition of "in town" further by adding the words "the

interior." The dreaded interior is defined by Justin as anything past Bi-Mart on Jacksonville Highway. For example, Costco and Fred Meyers are definitely within the boundaries of the "interior." So when he's asked what he has been up to he can say, "I have to go to town, but it's not too bad, it's not "the interior." I've never asked him his landmarks for Grants Pass...mmmm.

So let's all shop, eat and talk local since we now speak the same language. And when we come home to the Applegate we can "woot," which some of you may know was one of the Merriam-Webster's new words last year. "Woot:" expressing joy, after a triumph for no reason at all.

Author's Note: My friend Kathy Shepard (a former Sterling Creek resident) called today and asked me what I was up to. I knew I had two responses: I was either going in to town or had just come back from town. But on this day my answer was that I was frantically searching for a picture of "the White Horse of Sterling Creek" for an article for the Applegater. "What?" she asked immediately knowing what horse I was referring to. "Is the White Horse of Sterling Creek still alive?"

"Mmm..." I thought. "I wonder if I am writing about a dead horse?" In fact, I realized I had not seen him in his landmark spot. Through the phone chain of Sterling Creek I found he was owned by Bob Hayes and his brother Don. I got Don's wife Doris on the line and asked if the "White Horse of Sterling Creek" was still alive and maybe available for a photo shoot? Doris let me know that "Shadow" was very much alive, pushing 24 years of age, but unavailable at press time for an interview or photo shoot because "he is out of town on a hunting trip with Bob and Don."

Now that is really something to woot and whinny about!

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