

Bob's Corner

I've been a driven man since I was around 14, having taken the wheel of various and sundry motorized vehicles, whether I was licensed or not.

What brought up this topic was the occasion last week of my 60th birthday suit day this week, and the necessity of having to renew my Oregon license for driving. The renewal process was a good experience at the Cave Junction location of what everyone calls the "DMV office," although its official name is Driver & Motor Vehicle Services. Once again I passed the eye test without the necessity of having to wear cheaters (eyeglasses), and my new license is good until my 68th "yikes!" birthday.

And lo and behold, so to speak, my photo looks amazingly like me. I no longer resemble either a convict who has been hiding in dark alleys and sewer pipes for two weeks, or else someone with a poorly made Bob Rodriguez mask that partially melted after being run over by a triple semitruck-and-trailer rig. I'm happy with the mug shot.

As a young teen-ager I used to sneak my Dad's Buick out of the garage while he and my Mom were entertaining family and friends on their super-sized patio. I'd drive around the neighborhood, goosing that V-8 until I got scared enough to head back. When it came time for me to get my learner's permit in Chula Vista, Calif., when I was 15.5 years old, I was parked at the DMV office with a licensed driver when the place opened. Actually, I cannot recall who went with me. Could have been cousin Frank.

Anyway, back then (which seems like about a hundred years ago) I passed all the tests, including the parking exercise, although I ended up kind of far from the curb. The kindly examiner, obviously impressed with my maturity and demonstrated on-the-road skills, said he could tell that I'd get close enough eventually, and passed me. Nice guy.

And on the day I turned 16 I proudly got my full-time license, and drove away with several of my partially insane high school buddies urging me on. They wanted me to punch it as I drove away from the DMV office, but I refused. Although, a bit later, that '54 Oldsmobile V-8 engine mounted in my '52 Ford made some noise in and around the Downtown Chula Vista environs.

Unfortunately, that same Rube Goldberg car got me into a spot of trouble when I rashly decided to pass a '49 Mercury on a residential street. Chula Vista's finest had been tailing us, and pulled us both over, right after I passed the Merc. It was my first citation and my first encounter with police. And despite my wonderful driving skills, during the next several months the San Diego Police and California Highway Patrol issued me several other citations, also for moving violations. This was a blow to my ego. Also to my driving legally. Enough about that though.

I've always enjoyed driving. Except some other drivers haven't always enjoyed me. I confess: I was a tailgating terror, as I had a fat foot and a streak of impatience wider than the bald spot that's developed on the back of my head. And I drove way too fast and took too many chances, just like many other teen-agers and persons of youth. By the grace of God I never hit anyone, but I think some other drivers might have wanted to hit me. With their fists. If they could have managed to get me to stop. Or slow down.

Hot-rodding was kinda' fun back then, along with cruising drive-in restaurants and busy streets. Lived on black coffee and onion rings many a long night.

To be truthful, when I drove delivery vans and refrigerated bobtails I was a lot more careful than when driving my own car. Good thing, or my jobs might not have lasted all that long. Plus it became obvious, finally, that driving like a maniac from the Indy 500 wore out tires, clutches and transmissions much quicker than driving in a more sanitary manner. It wasn't as much "fun" though.

But as I age, continuing to be a driven man who's racking up mileage, fun is no longer what it's cracked up to be. No pun intended.

Letters to the Editor

(Editor's Note: Views and commentary expressed in letters to the editor are strictly those of the letter-writers.

Typed, double-spaced letters are acceptable for consideration. Hand-written letters that are double-spaced and highly legible also can be considered for publication. Cards of thanks are not accepted as letters.)

Healthy forests
From Sens. Ron Wyden, Dianne Feinstein, Patty Murray and Tim Johnson

(Editor's Note: The following letter, sent to President George W. Bush from those listed above, was submitted for this column.)

As you know, we have worked very hard for the past two years to achieve common ground on fire and forest health problems faced by our national forests. The legislation that we enacted together in a bipartisan fashion at the end of 2003 could protect thousands of communities and many millions of acres of forest land, but the effectiveness of that law will depend largely on achieving the necessary level of funding to address countless threats to communities and forests across the country.

The Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (Public Law 108-148), which you signed into law one month ago, authorizes \$760,000,000 for each fiscal year to carry out hazardous fuels reduction projects. This amount reflects data collected by the National Association of State Foresters based on the funding level necessary to treat all the at-risk federal lands in the U.S.

One of the most important actions you can take as President to promote success of the first forest management legislation to be enacted in more than a quarter century would be to include this level of funding in your Forest Service and Dept. of Interior Fiscal Year 2005

Budget.

We were very appreciative of the active participation of your administration in the negotiations with the House and Senate that produced the forest bill. Including full funding of the \$760,000,000 you agreed to in those negotiations would be the single most decisive step you could take to ensure broad support for the new law and its successful implementation.

Again, we ask that you include \$760,000,000 in the Forest Service and Dept. of Interior budget for hazardous fuel reduction projects, and that you do so without diminishing other important Forest Service or Dept. of Interior accounts. Please let us know if you have any questions regarding this issue.

Biscuit Fire
From Michelle and Jeff Smith
Grants Pass

As a member of the Siskiyou Project, a concerned citizen and a mom, I would like to voice my concerns about the proposed Biscuit Fire Salvage program put in action by the Bush administration.

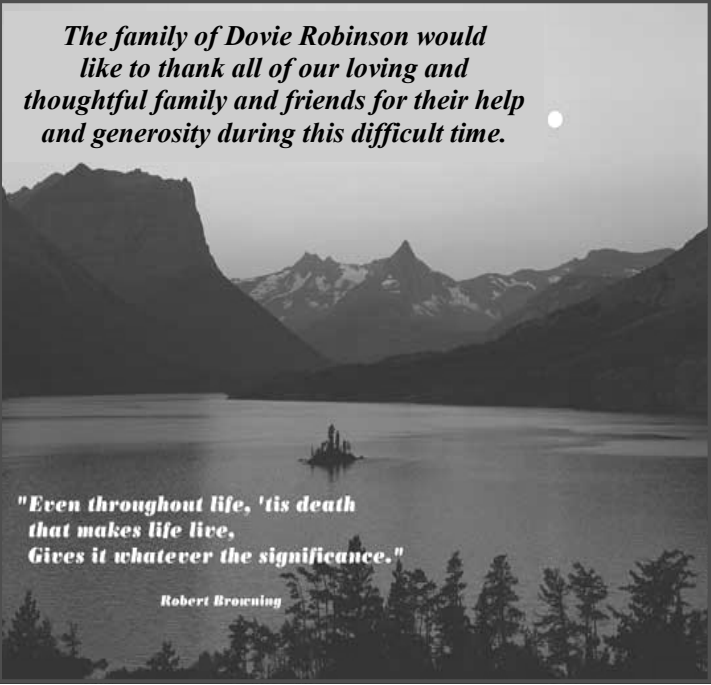
We all agree that some logging should be allowed in Siskiyou National Forest after the fire. But the 518 million proposed board feet that would be extracted from that biologically diverse area would be a huge mistake.

Not to mention the roadless areas that would be disturbed, the old-growth trees taken out, the slash that would be left, and erosion of the land as a result. Now is the time for us to stand up as a community and say, "This will not happen where we live and play."

These are our mountains that make this area diverse, unique, and worthy of protection. Let's urge the forest service to adopt Alternative 4 in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement minus the "research logging."



THIS MEANS YOU - For traffic safety reasons, the city of Cave Junction last week installed stop signs on Lister Street at Kerby Avenue, making a four-way stop. Drivers are urged to be aware of the change. City Recorder Jim Polk said that vandals took down the new signs in a short time, but they were reinstalled. Unofficial statistics note that during the first several days after the change, seven out of 10 drivers 'blew' the new stops on Lister. (Photo by Michelle Binker)



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People are like stained glass windows: They sparkle and shine when the sun's out, but when the darkness sets in, their true beauty is revealed only if there is light within.

- Elisabeth Kubler-Ross -

IVHS Activities Calendar
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Blame us if your life goes to Pappa!

FRIDAY, JAN. 23
*Clerical day - no classes for students
*Boys basketball vs. Mazama - here 3:45/5:30/7 p.m.
*Girls basketball at Mazama - 5:30/7 p.m.
SATURDAY, JAN. 24
*Wrestling at Willamette 9 a.m.
*All night grad benefit at Taylor's Sausage Country Store - 6 p.m.
TUESDAY, JAN. 27
*Boys basketball at Hidden Valley 5:30/5:30/7 p.m.
*Girls basketball vs. Hidden Valley - here 5:30/7 p.m.

The Valentine's Day ad deadline is Thursday, Feb. 5 at 3 p.m.

LIONS
The Men & Women of the Cave Junction Lions Club
Invite You To "Be Our Guest"
For Our 1st Annual "Community Night". Come & See How Our Lion's Club Contributes to Your Community & How You Can Be A Part Of It
At The Junction Inn Thursday, January 29th 2004 - 6:30 to 8:00 pm
Membership Open to Men & Women

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And Toluca, our Club Sponsored Puppy & her Raiser, Josie

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