

Bob's Corner

It was a dirty trick. But not especially surprising from one model railroad fan to another. A fiend, er ... friend ... so to speak, is responsible.

Recently met this guy, who knows of my infatuation with railroadianity, not to mention scale-model "toys." Yeah, right. Toys that cost more than a new car in some cases. Not really; just seems that way.

But hey, they've got model train locomotives now that come with authentic engine or boiler sounds, air brake noises, huffing and puffing, and idling. Not to mention whistles, horns and bells. Why, they've even got voices from the locomotives asking about water volume and stuff like that.

I mean, you'd think you were right there alongside the right-of-way, watching the Super Chief, Sunset Limited or other such high-balling rail motel roaring across the countryside. Of course, you've got to have the "right" mind-set for such shenanigans. Like me. Or "my friend."

This guy lured me to his house by describing his model railroad equipment and his layout. He knew that even though I switched from model railroading to drooling over the catalogues, that I was still coupled. And he is right.

Although I have no memory of such, I have a holy card marking the occasion of my first train trip, from San Diego to El Paso, Texas. I was 9 months old at the time, and it's likely that the clickety-clack, the chuffing and puffing, the rattling and the swaying imprinted themselves in my brain. On my soul maybe.

My mom (who died a year ago at 92) and I used to go every summer from San Diego to El Paso for part of the summer to visit her mom, sisters, friends and various relatives. Those were memorable trips for me. Eating in a rolling diner; watching the endless scenery pass by; hearing the crossing signals clang as we zipped through. There is nothing like riding a train; a self-encapsulated community of sojourners.

Because I could not afford my own full-size train, I became a model railroader. My first train was by Marx (the toy company, not the political philosopher). My dad and Uncle Ed set it up for me; then kept me from running it because they were having too much fun. I was about 5. Eventually they got tired or had to go to work or the bathroom or something, and I was able to take control.

Years later my dad gave my an S-gauge American Flyer diesel loco hauling some freight cars. That was a cool train, quite powerful. I foolishly traded it for some HO equipment. Wish I hadn't done that.

Later, my wife gave me an N-gauge set complete with scenery. It was a great gift, but when we moved from Bonita, Calif. to Poway, I sold it. Wish I hadn't.

Later, I moved into G-gauge equipment by LGB. It's large-scale stuff, but goes with my wife's saying, "The bigger the kid, the bigger the toys need to be." Something like that. And now, my model railroad "friend" has refired my boiler.

Guess I need to get on the right track.

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Illinois Valley News

An Independent Weekly Newspaper Co-owned and published by Robert R. (Bob) and Jan Rodriguez
 Bob Rodriguez, Editor El Jefe

Entered as second class matter June 11, 1937 at Post Office as Official Newspaper for Josephine County and Josephine County Three Rivers School District, published at 321 S. Redwood Hwy., Cave Junction, OR 97523
 Periodicals postage paid at Cave Junction, OR 97523
 Post Office Box 1370 USPS 258-820
 Telephone (541) 592-2541, FAX (541) 592-4330
 Volume 66, No. 18

Staff: Cindy Newton, Chris Robertson, Michelle Binker, Becky Loudon, Shane Welsh & Kacy Clement
 Member: Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association

DEADLINES:

News, Classified & Display Ads, Announcements & Letters
3 P.M. FRIDAY

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES

One year in Josephine County - \$20.80
 One year in Jackson and Douglas Counties - \$24.40
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POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to P.O. Box 1370, Cave Junction, OR. 97523

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. Handwritten letters that are double-spaced and highly legible also can be considered for publication.

Cards of thanks are not accepted as letters.)

'Environmental Police' From William Reid Cave Junction

Let's see if I have this right.

The Siskiyou Project has advised Rough & Ready Lumber Co. about "education" that could occur because of its potential involvement in Biscuit Fire timber salvage. Who do these folks think they are? Who appointed them as the Illinois Valley Environmental Police?

This type of "education" reminds me of Bernhard Rust, the minister of education for Nazi Germany. His aim was to educate some folks to extinction. I guess the "education" goal of Siskiyou Project is the extinction of mills, loggers, miners and anybody that does not agree with their philosophy.

These are the same folks that in February 2003 sued the Siskiyou National Forest over recreational miners using small dredges. These folks think that anything larger than a pan should not be used for gold mining.

These are the folks currently suing the U.S. Forest Service for its selection of Alternative 7 of the Biscuit Fire Recovery Project. How many trees have been cut to supply the paper these folks use in their court filings?

If Siskiyou Project would stop being Luddites and work with, not against the local community, perhaps we all could move forward. This is the 21st century, and this country is an industrialized nation. Like it or not, timber and mining play a vital role in our economy.

We cannot go back 200 years to a "pristine" Oregon. What we can do is manage what we have in a sensible manner. The 1994 Northwest Forest Plan lowered the annual sale in the Siskiyou Forest from 166 mbf (million board feet) to 24 mbf.

That was a drastic reduction, but apparently not enough for some who would like to see that cut at zero. Let the Siskiyou Project put their money where their mouth is and bid on the timber sale rather than try to steal it away through litigation.

Missing loved one From Brian Alec Thom Cave Junction

It's so nice when a "missing loved one story" has a happy ending.

On Thursday, July 8, my 14-year-old Collie/Samoyed mix wandered away in search of a drink. He ended up in the waterway, that trench, behind Giant Burger - wet, and unable to climb out.

He was discovered Friday morning by pedestrians. Oddly, the call went out for, "...the dog in the ditch..." It must have been a long, struggle-filled night.

I appreciate everyone involved for making the extra effort to save my lost dog, "Trophy."

Josephine County Animal Control Officer Bill Powell was on duty and ready to perform the hard task of lifting "Trophy" to safety. I am so grateful that we have him employed in our valley; I am moved to donate money toward his department's cause to honor his work.

Dr. Dan Fiske and his staff at Crossroads Animal Hospital were so kind to work my little crisis into their busy morning, by providing short-term shelter and a most-welcome phone call from Darlene.

The pastor and choir at Immanuel United Methodist Church reassured me and looked around for a lame dog in the bushes - I appreciate them for staying late (and I still ask myself, "How could we have missed looking in that direction?"). By the end of the evening, I was certain he had walked away to die in privacy with his dignity.

Then there were the "dear-hearts," those graceful ladies who take their morning stroll each day, and attended to this particular morning's challenge by keeping "Trophy" alert and present - they have restored my hope and begun again a spiritual awareness within me.

Of course, I acknowledge my friends (they know who they are) who advised me and said the right words and made me do the right things - well - how can you measure love?

If I have overlooked someone else, whose hands assisted in the rescue, I apologize for not

knowing them and being able to note them directly.

There has been so much bad news lately. The Illinois River Valley is full of healing, life-giving and fertile energy. I have only lived here for two years (although I am a native Oregonian) and already my dog and I have found the highest quality of life possible. For that, I am very thankful.

Lakeshore violators From Dusty Bouchard Selma

Sunday before last, my husband and I were on our way to church around 8:30 a.m. We live on McMullen Creek Road and go by the lake when we go anywhere.

The speed limit posted all the way around the lake is 20 miles per hour; not,

as some seem to believe, 20 miles per minute. There are small children, dogs, cats, and lots of geese around the lake.

That morning, someone, some uncaring and inconsiderate jerk, hit one of the baby geese and then left it to die a lingering death. All the other geese were standing around it as it flopped and cried and tried to get up.

This was what we saw as we drove past. We stopped, but had nothing in which to wrap the baby to try to get it to a veterinarian. Fortunately, someone else did have, and the baby was gone when we came home at noon.

I am constantly being tailgated, having lights flashed at me, and passed

(Continued on page 3)

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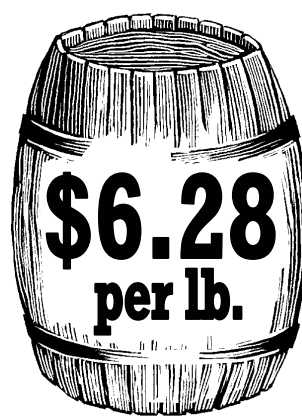
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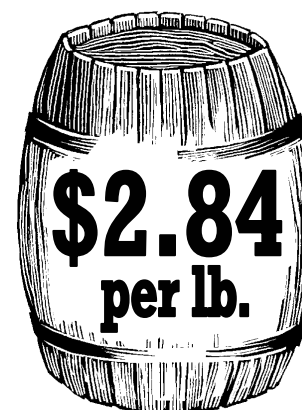
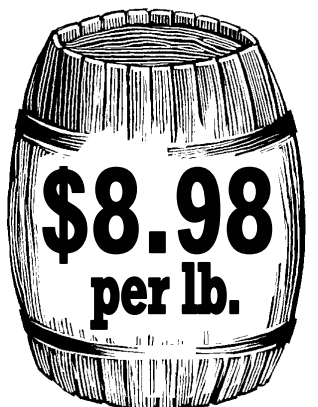
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