

Bob's Corner

Seems as though some Christmas memories endure longer than others. I was thinking about that a couple of days ago, while picking up broken Christmas tree ornaments courtesy of our cat, "Bubba," when it dawned on me that this coming Christmas Eve marks the day five years ago when I brought Jan home from Providence Portland Hospital the day after her mastectomy surgery.

Her physician was a truly skilled Chinese surgical oncologist with a sense of humor. How we ended up with him in Portland is a story all by itself, so it'll have to wait. Anyway, prior to the surgery he told us that if Jan had a mastectomy she'd have to stay in the hospital 24 hours afterward, but if she underwent a lumpectomy it would only be 23 1/2 hours.

Of course, the days preceding the surgery were a bit of a strain. We stayed with friends in Newberg, and commuted from there for the early morning (and I mean *early* morning) lab tests and all that. I only got lost one foggy morning when I missed an off-ramp and ended up in a part of Downtown Portland where the first 12 people I asked had never heard of the hospital we sought. Fortunately a friendly trash man was able to give us terrific directions, and we were only a few minutes late that a.m.

The hospital was crowded that holiday week. The lobby and coffee shop were jammed. I don't like hospitals, but I'm glad they exist: It's just that there are so many hurting people that it hurts to see them and their loved ones. Especially during the Yule season.

Well, Jan underwent the surgery Dec. 23. I waited in the lobby with two friends, both Quaker pastors, who buoyed me up and helped me stay relatively calm. When I was buzzed (with one of those electronic dealies that some restaurants use now) that I could go see the doctor after the surgery, he was typically confident, telling me that he "cleaned out" the bad stuff and that it was all good. I went to see Jan, and it was so pleasing to see her awake, although she was in some pain. I was grateful nonetheless.

I stayed until early evening, then drove back amid world-class traffic to Newberg and slept for about 12 hours straight before returning the next morning. It was strange that Dec. 24 because the hospital then was nearly deserted. The coffee shop was closed; there were no people in the lobby. It was a bit spooky.

The doctor eventually (as doctors can "eventuate" so well) released her. We left the hospital around noon, I think, and began the Interstate 5 trip home. You never know how rough and bumpy a road is, even I-5, until you have someone in the passenger seat who is 24 hours out of surgery. But we made it back home, and it was indeed Christmas Eve.

It was the best Christmas gift I could think of, having my loving wife home safe. Now it's been five years without a recurrence of the cancer, and she's still safe. We are both grateful.

Although there were some wrinkles the next day (and that's yet *another* story), Christmas songs and hymns touched us in ways they never had before. The term, "Merry Christmas" and the phrase "tears of joy" took on new dimensions.

Five years ago, and the memories of that trip and time are as though they were yesterday. So I say, God is good: "Joy to the World!"

Whatever God's dream about man may be,
it seems certain it cannot come true
unless man cooperates.

- Stella Terrill Mann -

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Letters to the Editor

(Editor's Note: Views and commentary, including statements made as fact, are strictly those of the letter-writers.)

Typed, double-spaced letters written solely to this newspaper are considered for publication. Hand-written letters that are double-spaced and legible also can be considered.

Cards of thanks are not accepted as letters.

Angry Angel
From Linda Butler
Harvest Kitchen coordinator
Cave Junction

A couple of weeks ago a very kind lady, in the "Illinois Valley News" Letters to the Editor called those of us who work at Harvest Kitchen, "Angels."

I am now one "Angry Angel," because, as I unloaded food, both donated and purchased for the Kitchen at St. Matthias Episcopal Church on Monday, Dec. 13, someone jumped into and stole my car with my purse and a briefcase I use for Harvest Kitchen purposes.

There were cash and check donations as well as all records of donations, etc. for the year in that briefcase.

This thief, or thieves, stole not only from me, but also from those in need here in the valley.

I ask that anyone who sees a tan 1997 "Jimmy," license plate WJT 108, or finds a green briefcase and/or a black purse, to immediately contact the Josephine County Sheriff's Office at 474-5123 or the confidential tip line at 474-5160.

Rock billboard
From Jack Heald
HOVA (Hwy. One-99 Visitor Association)
Cave Junction

Because there will not be a Christmas Parade this year, the coral-colored sign-boards on the rock billboard on the Select Market parking lot in Cave Junction will be removed and stored for the winter. They will be reinstalled in the spring.

Civic organizations are reminded that the sign-boards (both sides) will be available again in the spring and summer months for use in posting advertisements and dates of coming events.

Organizations include Blackberry Festival, Shining Stars, I.V. Lions Club, Cave Junction Lions Club, Barter Faire, Dome School and I.V. Chamber of Commerce.

Others will be welcome to work with us.

'Bill of Goods'
From Kristine Strohl
Cave Junction

Haven't we been sold a bill of goods by this administration?

Remember, our congressional representatives were pressed to sign the Patriot Act without reading it, or be considered unpatriotic.

There was a Medicare Reform Bill, which only spurred retirees to buy millions of dollars of worthless discount cards, but made millions for special contributors to the Bush campaign.

Then we had the Clear Skies Initiative that was anything but clear, but lifted pollution bans against energy companies and saved them millions.

Let's not ever forget our pre-emptive attack against Iraq, WMDs and "Mission accomplished," a war that is far from over and has cost nearly 1,300 American lives, but made Halliburton millions.

And there was "No Child Left Behind," which has left some behind because it was not fully funded.

Now, we are being sold another goodie with tremendous spin: Social Security needs to be privatized because it is insolvent. Hmmm. Surely it isn't a push by Wall Street to control our retirements and make billions on our accounts? How much money did they contribute to Bush/Cheney?

Remember, there are no guarantees investing in the stock market. But you are guaranteed to grow old.

We need to be informed and not be sold a bunch of lies because Social Security is solvent for another 30 years, and then only small adjustments will be needed to ensure its perpetuity.

Those who want to call phone Sens. Smith (608-9102) and Wyden (858-5122) and tell them they want to keep Social Security for themselves and their children.

Pregnancy Center view
From Vaughn T. Slavin
Cave Junction

I sat down the morning of Friday, Dec. 17 and perused Letters to the Editor in

"Illinois Valley News."

The first one I read was a very uplifting and positive letter from Crystal Griffin. It was nice to read something that wasn't trashing another person's viewpoint or personal belief.

In stark contrast to her letter was the diatribe by Geraldine Davidson that followed. As I read the letter I thought, "This lady is trashing the pregnancy center big time. Why?" As I continued through the letter, I came to realize that she was lashing out in frustration. The pregnancy center

(Continued on page 3)

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