

Bob's Corner

My father was not much of a camper, and I'm not either, but I'm working on it. Although sometimes it can get downright discouraging.

But first, I must recollect when I was in maybe the fifth-grade and discovered that my dad was so not into camping that on his inaugural camping weekend with Uncle Ed and Aunt Bert he wanted to know where he could go to change into his pajamas. As we were at a primitive camp site, this merited a glower and a growl from veteran outdoorsman Uncle Ed.

Then it poured on us like a Hollywood storm that night. It was not the most pleasant experience in my young life, and it ended camping for dear ol' dad. We left early the next morning, despite Uncle Ed's complaining that we had 30 minutes of low-gear driving ahead of us. I never did find out if dad got to wear his PJs though.

A couple years later, as a Tenderfoot charter member of Boy Scout Troop 899 in National City, Calif., I went on another overnight camping trip. This was much more extravagant than sleeping in our backyard and coming in before dawn because it was too cold or hot, or I was hungry for a doughnut or a gallon-bowl of cold cereal.

No, this was the real deal. I had a sleeping bag, a pack, a canteen, cooking utensils. I was set, and envisioned myself as a cross between Sgt. Preston of the Yukon and Daniel Boone. It was quite cold when we arrived at the camp in the Cuyamaca Mountains of San Diego County that night.

In fact, it was so cold that when we awoke the next morning, we discovered a lovely frozen frosting atop everything, including our sleeping bags. There had been a sneak snow, and we, being Boy Scouts, were prepared, of course. The worst part of breakfast, besides the pancakes sticking and shredding, was the frozen syrup. But we managed. Then we left, as the adult leaders said it was too cold for us.

Not too long ago, we were camping in Salem near I-5, and I was having trouble going to sleep because of the freeway noise. Then Jan suggested that I consider the noise of each passing vehicle as an ocean wave. And you know what? It worked. It was a matter of mind-bending, and it worked.

Most recently, we decided to spend a night at Jed Smith Campground in Hiouchi, Calif. down Hwy. 199 from Illinois Valley. We had driven in the week before, and I was taken aback a bit when the attendant told us that we could check out the park without paying, but that if we were in for longer than 15 minutes, it would cost \$6.50. We made the deadline, and decided to return the next week.

The telephone reservation cost 20 bucks plus something like a \$7.50 service fee. After our experience at Jed Smith, although it's lovely, we likely will not return. In fact, Jan came up with Three Rules for Camping: *Just because you pay more than double what you last paid for camping doesn't mean the place is going to be better or that hot showers are included. *Always bring a flame-thrower. And, *Don't forget your pillows!

We discovered too late that the showers are coin-operated. This was not explained previously either by voice or in the brochure. As for the flame-thrower: I've started a lot of fires in my time, but I failed on this trip. The large wood at our site would not ignite. I gave up after burning every piece of paper I could find in our van, plus a bunch of kindling. Forgetting our pillows was our fault, of course.

Taken all together, including the attack mosquitoes, we left after a few hours and came home. That's where our pillows were. And we didn't need quarters to take a hot shower.

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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.

Fire heroes

From Don & Jorene Bierbrower Selma

We sincerely appreciate all in the valley who worked to extinguish the Deer Creek Fire: the many volunteers who acted quickly to contain the fire, the many that plowed fire breaks, and those who worked, in many ways, to protect homes and property.

Neighbors watched over property so that no theft of property took place during the fire. They are all heroes to those of us who live in the immediate area.

Many helped in so many other ways. The fire started and moved so rapidly, that is difficult for us to know all the ways that friends and neighbors in the valley helped, yet they touched each of our lives in many ways.

We appreciate those who put some of us up in their homes during that time, plus those who cared for our animals, from cats to horses, and those who watched over our homes and property when we were not able to do so ourselves.

Our appreciation extends to utility people, who, when able to come into the affected area, worked to restore our communication with the outside world.

The prayers and offers of help came from many people who live in our valley, as well as many from Grants Pass and elsewhere. Their concern and open hearts have meant so much to those of us in close proximity to the fire.

Liberal results

From Gregory D. Anderson Cave Junction

It is unfortunate that we have been given the opportunity to see the result of Democratic Liberal Great Society Rule in a city and state as a result of the "Katrina" hurricane disaster.

New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin didn't have the time to send the hundreds of idle city buses around the city to evacuate the poor, the handicapped and the elderly prior to "Katrina's" arrival.

He was unable to ensure the health or safety of patients in hospitals. He neglected to have food, water and security in the emergency evacuation centers to which his citizens were directed for help.

He did find time to seek personal safety and comfort at a Hyatt hotel. He did squeeze in time to phone radio talk shows to complain that George and the federal government were at fault. He was able to buy a home in Dallas, Texas so he and his family could be comfortable while his citizens of New Orleans were dying and fighting for survival.

He has been available to fly back to his city for photo ops. And now he is telling us that he must be in charge of the rebuilding of this historic city.

Of course, the race-baiting Black leaders like Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton ignored the blatant incompetence of this Black

mayor and agreed that it was George's fault. Then Democratic Gov. Blanco refused to listen to the president when he called before "Katrina" hit, to let him federalize her National Guard to prepare for the worst.

She then did precious little to help her citizens. She was quick to announce that it was all George's fault.

While thousands of hungry, thirsty, tired and hopeless were trapped in the Superdome in squalid conditions, the Louisiana Homeland Security refused to let the Red Cross and other rescuers provide them with life-saving needs. They said it would encourage other survivors to go there. This too, was George's fault.

The most preposterous charge of all was made by the nephew of one of our finest presidents and son of a truly great man, Robert Kennedy Jr. His bizarre reasoning was that the hurricane was so strong because George didn't buy into the socialist-inspired, job-killing Kyoto Protocol.

He apparently believes that mankind can actually control cyclic global warming, when in fact it is just another wealth redistribution effort by the extremist left.

A Fox newscaster interviewed a well-built male in his mid-20s or so on live TV in Houston. He had been transported, fed, clothed, and provided free medical help as needed, and a clean, dry bed. He was asked about the apparent mix-up on how much money evacuees were to be given. His angry retort was: "I want what the f*** I deserve!"

My liberal friends need to realize that this epitomizes the mentality of social liberal policies forced on a population for more than a half-century in New Orleans. Unfortunately, this liberal frame of mind -- that the nanny government owes them -- calls today's Democratic Party home.

Self-reliance, not government dependence, provides the best opportunity for us and our family's future. Private agencies, businesses, churches and individual volunteers give the best and fastest aid in emergencies, not government.

We would be well served and save billions, if our government hired Red Cross, the Salvation Army, Wal*Mart, Home Depot, and many others to do the job; not another incompe-

tent, inefficient, uncaring gargantuan bureaucracy more dedicated to protecting their jobs and power than to the people who pay their salaries.

Old-growth protection From Shannon Wilson Eugene (former resident of Selma)

When the Deer Creek Fire was less than two miles from my parents' home near the headwaters of Draper Creek, where I grew up, I told my mom that the fire would lose considerable momentum once it topped the ridge and reached the few hundred acres of big, old fire-resistant trees on the downhill side.

Those trees and big, old downed logs that make up older forest stands are the best insurance against wildfires. Illinois Valley is at a crucial point, perhaps it's already surpassed an optimum, but I.V. residents should do everything in their power to protect these old-growth stands and all bigger old trees throughout the Illinois River Watershed.

I believe that everyone living in the valley needs to demand that the U.S. Forest Service, Medford BLM and Josephine County stop logging those big, old tree stands surrounding their communities and instead strive to protect them.

At this moment the Siskiyou National Forest is planning an old-growth sale (Home Page Project) in the area of Page Mountain/Althouse Creek/West Fork Illinois River Watershed.

There may be a lot more timber sales in the works.

Josephine County has considerable land holdings in the valley which I say it is continuing to degrade by removing the biggest trees.

Sure, thin old plantations and remove the fuel ladders, especially to protect communities and remaining old tree stands. Those old clear-cuts are the most hazardous when it comes to spreading wildfires.

It is up to us. Continue to allow what I call incompetent and corrupt agencies to degrade the valley or take control to protect our homes and families from future forest fires.

Scientifically amusing From Elynn Coley Cave Junction

Isn't it amazing-amusing that John Bazen ("Is God laughing" letter, "I.V. News," Sept. 14) uses scientific discoveries as his anti-science argument?

Does he believe that the atomic resonance microscope was designed by the College of Cardinals? Or by dedicated scientists?

Did a bishop describe the complexity of the cell, or a biologist? The church always has set itself firmly against science, and has always been proven wrong.

The Earth does go around the sun. A surgeon washing his hands does prevent infection. And humans have walked on the moon.

As for a single mortal life being meaningless:

(Continued on page 3)

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