

Bob's Corner

This is as good a time as any for a colorful column, even though it's in black and white. The topic arose a couple weeks back when I wrote that our in-house black panther, Flint Eastwood, has green eyes. Actually, he has yellow eyes.

My fellow pet cat-keeper straightened me out as to the correct color. She accused me of possibly being sort of colorblind, although I think it's just a matter of chromatic interpretation perhaps related to light saturation. How's that for weaseling?

Just the other night at a large gathering I pointed out a man wearing a green shirt. She said, "It's not green, it's blue." At least, I think it went that way. Maybe I said he was wearing a blue shirt, and it was actually green. Maybe I should use some other description. Like I could say, "He's the guy built like a refrigerator." Or a utility pole or whatever. That might work better.

Actually, this color shift might be hereditary. I recall that Way Back, when I was the world's oldest 2nd Class Boy Scout, my Dad bought a '55 Buick off a showroom floor. He told us it was green. But when he got it home, it was blue. Weird.

More than 20 years ago, while serving as editor-and-publisher of the "Curry Coastal Pilot" in Brookings, I attended annual company gatherings in Bend. Thanks to Jan, I dressed well, because she provided a list of what shirts to wear with what trousers.

She did the same thing for me when I went to a conference in Washington, D.C. All I had to do was not lose the list to look sharp. No telling what I would have looked like without that list.

At this time of my life, I manage to select shirts and trousers, or sweaters that basically go together. It wasn't always that way. There was a time when people would point at me and fall down laughing, or cover their eyes when I came into view wearing the color combinations I'd chosen.

Actually, my being able to choose good combos probably has a lot to do with Jan weeding through my part of the closet to be sure my stuff is up to snuff and hung together. And she is good at telling me when I've combined unattractive colors. For example, I asked her the other day what I should wear with my yellow-and-pink shirt and purple pants. "Hip boots," she answered.

Anyway, these days, I still can tell red traffic signals from green ones. Isn't that enough? And if I see red, or red-and-blue flashing lights behind me, I pull to the side of the road.

As for the eye colors of our four cats: No comment.

Weather Watch

Cave Junction

Wednesday, March 7

Copious clouds, chance of sprinkles
High--52, Low--34.

Thursday, March 8

Smattering of sunshine
High--51, Low--35.

Friday, March 9

Rain returns in evening
High--55, Low--39.

Saturday, March 10

Lot's of clouds w/rain
High--61, Low--40.

Sunday, March 11

Rain dwindling, then clouds
High--64, Low--34.

Monday, March 12

Chance of continued cloudiness
High--58, Low--31.

Tuesday, March 13

Somewhat sunny
High--52, Low--30

Following are the high-and-low temperatures, and rainfall, recorded in O'Brien by Cheryl & Harry Johnson.

*Fri., Feb. 23: 42-32 0.94 snow 5.00

*Sat., Feb. 24: 44-36 1.65 snow 2.00

*Sun., Feb. 25: 41-34 1.26 snow 2.00

*Mon., Feb. 26: 40-33 0.43 snow 5.00

*Tues., Feb. 27: 39-32 0.20 snow 10.00

*Wed., Feb. 28: 36-33 snow 3.00

*Thurs., March 1: 44-34 0.75 snow 1.00

Following are the high-and-low temperatures, and rainfall, recorded in Cave Junction at Mountain Wind Farm.

*Fri., Feb. 23: 44-29 0.83

*Sat., Feb. 24: 46-35 1.28

*Sun., Feb. 25: 39-33 1.85

*Mon., Feb. 26: 39-31 0.54

*Tues., Feb. 27: 40-31 0.61

*Wed., Feb. 28: 46-32 0.95

*Thurs., March 1: 47.32 0.78

PERS better

"PlanSponsor" magazine has recognized the Oregon Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) for closing its \$17 billion dollar pension funding gap.

The national publication named PERS as its Public Plan Sponsor of the Year. The announcement was made in the cover story of the magazine's February issue.

"Oregon PERS made tough decisions and confronted the issues head-on," said Nevin E. Adams, editor-in-chief of "PlanSponsor" magazine. It recognized the bold PERS system reforms and the \$60 billion retirement fund investment by the Office of the State Treasurer and the Oregon Investment Council.

During 2003 the PERS system was facing a \$17 billion unfunded actuarial liability. Because of PERS reform, good investment returns, and pension obligation bond investments the PERS system now has a \$1.75 billion surplus, the magazine reported.

Republicans

(Continued from page 1)

to support the surge in military personnel.

On other issues, delegates voted 119-109 to tie public funding of state schools to student performance; voted 121-73 to amend Oregon's Constitution to abolish state-sponsored gambling, including the lottery and video gaming machines; and voted 92-81 against recommending repeal of the National Real ID Act.

In a straw poll of Republican presidential candidates, delegates selected former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani as their top pick. Giuliani received 60 votes; former House Speaker Newt Gingrich and former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney 34 each; and Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) 19, despite being the only candidate with a booth at the annual event.

Daylight-time

(Continued from page 1)

passed a law to "preserve daylight and provide standard time for the United States."

Repealed in 1919, President Roosevelt instituted year-round DST during World War II, when it was referred to as War Time.

After the war ended in 1945, DST was no longer a law. However, some states still used it, which led to a number of scheduling difficulties. The Uniform Time Act of 1966 was signed by President Johnson. States that wanted an exemption had to pass a state law to do so. Currently Hawaii and Arizona are the only states that do not participate.

Since then, there have been various modifications to DST, but the biggest change is this year, when the clock changes will be pushed back and ahead one month.

Letter 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.

"Thank you" submissions are not accepted as letters.

One-year O&C Band-Aid offers time for planning
From Don Loving, Public Affairs director, Oregon Council 75, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Portland

A solution to the "county payments" issue is proving elusive.

Without the funds traditionally provided by timber receipts and, more recently, subsidies from the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act, several Oregon counties are beginning to lay off workers or making plans to do so.

As can be inferred from our organization's name, this is a big concern. Many of the workers targeted for layoff are members of our union. But despite what may be thought about public employees and their unions, this issue is not about people "keeping their jobs" -- it's about good public policy. And, dare we say it, the moral obligation of the federal government.

This issue has become much harder than it needs to be. Oregon is the 10th-largest state geographically, yet more than 50 percent of our land is owned by Uncle Sam, who pays no property taxes. Counties rely on property taxes to fund their most basic and essential services.

To offset that loss of revenue, federal officials agreed decades ago that Oregon counties should receive a share of the funds gained from timber cut on federal forest lands. That system worked fine as long as trees were being cut.

But in the 1980s, recession and increased concerns about the environment severely decreased the number of trees harvested, prompting the federal subsidies. It's a fair trade-off given the reality of our geography.

Yet our AFSCME International lobbyist working this issue on Capitol Hill says that many legislators "just don't get it." Never mind that Oregon has counties larger than some states, nor that it's hardly our fault God covered the Pacific Northwest with trees.

"They need to diversify their economy out there," our D.C. lobbyist hears repeatedly. Hey, if there were an economic diversification silver bullet, Oregon counties would surely have fired it years ago. Achieving such diversification isn't easy when your county's largest land owner is an increasingly disinterested out-of-stater.

The original Secure

Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act was an understood "deal" reflecting geography and economics. Many lawmakers from other states don't like the fact that Oregon receives such a large portion of the payouts. But the proportion is based on the reality that this is where the trees are -- or at least were.

And that argument is disingenuous at best. Oregon has no large military bases that receive seemingly endless federal funding. We receive no subsidies for not growing a particular cancer-causing crop. No cash for acres of unused or otherwise inoperative oil derricks.

Nationally, people want Oregon to have pristine, publicly owned forests. We're fine with that, but there's a price to pay.

It appears that the best solution for now is a one-year "emergency extension" of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act to be attached to a supplemental budget earmarked to move

through Congress sometime in March.

We're encouraging AFSCME members to write House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and urge her to throw her considerable clout behind this extension, and we urge the general public to join our effort. It's a Band-Aid at best, but would buy some needed time to devise a long-term solution.

And note that Congress is rarely swayed by e-mail. People should take the time to write a "real letter" and invest 39-cents in Oregon's future.



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Correction

A presentation in the Feb. 28 issue on page 14 about O'Brien residents George & Anwyn Leverett and their daughter, Annaka, contained two errors.

First the headline stating that they are working on their second album is incorrect. It will be their fifth album. Second, the name of that album is "Hearth Light," not "Heart Light."

"Illinois Valley News" apologizes for the blunders.



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