

Bob's Corner

In honor of Labor Day 2007, I am not laboring, but reprinting an item written by Jerry Goodrum, a retired public relations executive from San Diego. It has elements of newspapering and trains, so how could I pass it up? Here's the column by Goodrum:

It was 1935, and my first paper route turned my world into a magical place where anything was possible. I mean anything.

Mayfield, Kansas, where I grew up, had no crime rate. There was nothing in the town worth stealing. It was the heart of the Great Plains Bible Belt, and some of God's best people lived there. You could figure it wasn't their fault if the Great Depression hit Mayfield just as hard as anywhere else on Earth. The Depression had no geographic boundaries. But why would the Lord also inflict the Great Plains Drouth on such God-fearing people? Both plagues at the same time? It was a double whammy.

It was only for adults to wonder about. We kids didn't know we were poor. In fact, when I look back I think that maybe we were blessed. Kids nowadays are totally supervised. They will never know freedom. But in our day there were no bad people in Mayfield for parents to fear, so we largely ran free, except for school and the odd jobs that all kids were required to do.

But there, in the middle of the Depression and the Drouth, I struck it rich. I mean really rich. What happened was that some other kid grew up to bigger things and handed off his paper route to me. I was 10 years old and suddenly making \$10 a month. I walked tall. But I had a lot to learn about money.

The first thing that happened was that another older kid, Francis Porter, convinced me I needed a bicycle. It wasn't a hard sell on his part. What kid wouldn't want a shiny new red bicycle when he'd never before had any hope of ever owning one? Except it wasn't exactly new. Francis was handy with his hands, and he made my "new" bike out of parts salvaged from several old worn-out bikes. And painted it red. Wow! I readily took on the monthly payments of \$1 for 10 months, only to be told by numerous people the bike wasn't worth more than \$5. But I didn't care. I was rich.

Being rich had a downside. For example, there were competing newspapers from Wichita that served our town, and the kid who threw the other paper was four years older than I. He took competition seriously and regularly beat me up.

But there was an upside, too. Like when I discovered that there was a law requiring railroads to stop their passenger trains for anyone wanting to get on. This was the heyday of the glamorous trains that crisscrossed America -- the Zephyr, the Empire Builder. Important people like politicians and movie stars all rode them. The Santa Fe's crack train that ran through Mayfield on its daily journey between Los Angeles and Chicago was, I think, the Chief, or maybe the Super Chief, I don't remember. It thundered through Mayfield so fast it nearly swept the tiny depot off its foundation.

Its engine was a living, breathing animal that belched black smoke into the sky and hissed pure white steam out its nostrils. The shrill of its whistle told you, don't even think of trying to beat me to the crossing. This great black monster was king of the universe, and it didn't stop 'til it got to Wellington, a Santa Fe division point, 9 miles away. Actually, it was only 7 miles, but for revenue purposes the Santa Fe called it 9 miles. At a penny a mile the trip cost 9-cents. It was affordable for those of us with money.

So, I had a plan, now that I was rich. And I was smart enough at age 10 not to tell anyone about it except my mom, of course, who had no way of knowing the extremes of the Santa Fe's emotions. I would go every Saturday to the station agent, Mr. Oscar McClellan, and demand that he flag down the Chief for me so that I could ride it to Wellington where there were two movie theaters. One was the Regent -- expensive at 15-cents -- and the other was the Lyric, which only cost a nickel for the Saturday afternoon double feature. There was a serial, *Flash Gordon*, a heroic swashbuckler in the strange world of science fiction. He could wow you right out of your seat. The other feature was always a Western with blazing pistols, galloping horses, and the good guys bringing the bad guys to final justice.

So the total cost was 14-cents; why be rich if you couldn't enjoy it? I didn't worry about how to get home again. I could go to the Ford Garage on the main street where many farmers often stopped before driving back to Mayfield. They'd always give me a ride.

I still remember how Mr. McClellan's jaw muscles would twitch and his teeth would grind when he had to flag down that train. But my anticipation of seeing Ken Maynard or Hopalong Cassidy or Tom Mix made me do it anyway. I wasn't exactly innocent in what I was about. In fact, the engineer would be screaming from the engine cab. The conductor, watch in hand and counting the seconds, would leap off the train to the station platform and demand to know what in blazes was going on. The brakeman would be yelling "Is this an emergency?"

Passengers would be staring out the windows. They'd see this dumb 10-year-old kid scrunch down and climb aboard while the embarrassed station agent slunk back to his desk. Then the exasperated conductor would below, "Highball!" to the engineer and the great train would thunder into action again.

The plan worked for a while until Mr. Mac told my dad what I was doing.

It was the end of an era. I've never been that rich since.

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.

'Thank you' submissions are not accepted as letters.

**N. Old Stage Road speeders can kill
From Annie Bales
Cave Junction**

There is a problem of drivers speeding on North Old Stage Road that grieves my heart.

The animals and children are not safe, because of the speeders. The speed limit is 30 mph. Drivers need to obey this or the death of someone could be their fault. This letter is a plea for human and animal safety.

Some drivers are using this residential area as a freeway. They need to slow down and not kill. Speed kills. Those doing it know if they are guilty.

**Good Samaritan lauded by man who lost wallet
From Bob Hahanson
Happy Camp, Calif.**

Approximately a week ago my billfold fell out of my car at the top of Grayback Mt. on the way home from the fair.

A few days went by, and I got a call from the Cave Junction Post Office. I was told that a man was there with my billfold. I said, "What about the \$973 that was in it?" The postal worker said, "Yes, that's here also."

So if any Illinois Valley residents know Richard Nisha they should pat him on the back and remind him that he is very special. I did not meet him, but did talk to him on the phone. People like him are few and far between.

**So. Oregon Outreach given large compliment
From Bruce Willard
Kent, Wash.**

I was at the mall in Cave Junction, curious about what Southern Oregon Outreach Foundation is all about. And I feel that this is going to be great.

In the short time I was there, I witnessed and talked to many families enjoying low-cost food purchases. One patron happily informed me, "I am a single mom; I cannot feed my family without them."

The income generated from the sales of the food goes back into the community in many ways.

This larger facility allows us to provide better selection, and more community services, and have a warehouse right here in the same location. This is especially nice as we lost thousands of dollars in merchandise because of locals who break into our warehouses and steal food and items.

And that's crazy, I was told, as it would be given to

them if they are hungry. Also in the same facility is the new Teen Youth Group Meeting Center which will be undergoing new improvements, the soup kitchen which has been serving the community for some time now and First Love Church which also has a great prison ministry.

Many distributions go to local nonprofits, local community food banks, and families in need. This is a great thing for this community. I see so many changes every time I come back here, but this is a great one.

**Eating meat seen as bar to entering Heaven
From Ronald Greene
Cave Junction**

Michael Vick, the dog killer, has blood on his hands. However, the rest of us, including the readers of this newspaper, stand just as guilty.

We also have blood on our hands, and due to perverted appetites nationally, it goes through our hands and into our guts. Being mammals, cattle have nervous systems almost identical to ours.

Cattle feel the horrors of pain. They scream when the blade hits them. Their blood flies through the air and splashes onto the walls, the floor, and the rubber coat and boots of the slaughterhouse assassin all day, every day, by the millions. Cattle, sheep, swine and other animals are continuously slaughtered to satisfy man's depraved, never-ending appetite for blood.

We pack our stomachs with their dead carcasses as we demand the slaughterhouses to keep the supply coming. All this animal suffering despite an abundance of fruits, vegetables, nuts, herbs and grains in the USA. But we are not satisfied unless we have a continual supply of the flesh and blood of dead animals to munch on.

We cannot point the finger of accusation at Vick without pointing two fingers at ourselves.

Looking into the face of a cow in a pasture we see they are so trusting, but we plot to turn them into burgers. What about lamb chops? God the Father chose/created the lamb to be a symbol of His Son Jesus. So innocent are they.

But we are not satisfied until we shed their blood and continually introduce them into our belly.

If Christians hope to enter Heaven, now is the time to practice being vegetarian, because in Heaven, only vegetarians will be allowed to enter. See Revelation 21:4.

**Illinois Valley News has big fan out there
From Daniel Dalegowski
O'Brien**

I was just perusing your Website and noticed that you have included a vast archive of PDF versions of

the paper.

I am thrilled to see this, and I wish more institutions made their back issues available in a free, public manner as you have. As a concerned citizen who often needs to research topics quickly, a user and designer of Websites, and a mourner of our lost libraries, I am very impressed by the easy access you are providing to this valuable resource.

You and your staff produce a great paper, and I want to thank you for all your hard work.

**Tough Truck event highly appreciated
From Harry & Cheryl Johnson
O'Brien**

The Illinois Valley Lions Club, drivers, and fans had great fun for the first (hopefully annual) Tough Truck Challenge.

It was fantastic to see wholesome, family fun in Cave Junction. What a great idea from one or more of the I.V. Lions. How wonderful that the valley "voted with their feet" and chose to support this first-of-its-kind event in the valley.

It was terrific to see the drivers having such a great time completing the track, or having fun crashing -- in

a safe environment.

As we understand it, there were more trucks on Sunday than Saturday. That means that it was worth fixing the breakdowns, and word spread to friends and family to bring out their beater trucks for some fun.

By our uneducated "guesstimating," there were easily more than 1,000 people at the Tough Truck Challenge Sunday. Young and old, parents and their children, women and men: everyone was enjoying the fun in the sun.

We appreciate the city of CJ for having the wisdom to allow this event. The city could have easily cited liability issues and squashed it before one scoop of dirt was piled. And I.V. Lions deserve a "Good on ya." It's a great idea, and we'd like them to do it again.

We appreciate the drivers for bouncing their bodies around the cabs of their trashed-up trucks for our enjoyment. The sponsors who had their names on trucks and signs hanging around the tracks also are appreciated for their support and contributions.

We eagerly await the second annual Tough Truck Challenge in 2008.

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