

Bob's Corner

It's said that Christmas comes but once a year, although some would disagree with that premise. I subscribe to the belief that we can have Christmas year-round; it's all a matter of attitude. Oh, and gifts every month or so wouldn't be too bad either.

Speaking of gifts, my Dad was absolutely terrible about wanting to know what he was getting. He would ask questions, trying to get a hint of what was inside all that wrapping paper. He also was not above picking up his wrapped gifts and shaking them, or squeezing them. In fact, one year we actually discovered that each of his packages had somehow gotten a peep-hole ripped in the bottom.

When my Mom, brother Steve and I asked him how those holes could possibly have gotten there, he was hard-put to answer. He finally said that maybe the cat had done it. You know how kitties are, always wanting to open packages to see if there's anything in there for them. However, we did not have a cat, so that excuse didn't fly.

Decorating the tree was a chore that always fell to my Mom, brother and me. And it was quite a chore, what with all the stuff we had for decorations. Besides, in those Early Days we had those awful strings of lights that would not light if one light was burned out. Many will recall what it was like trying to find that one dang bulb. And it also was a joy when several full strings went out because of a single light in one string. My favorite lights were the ones that bubble.

And it was all worth it. Mostly. I especially liked putting on the tinsel, although I often was chastised for throwing it at the branches instead of placing it with geometrical precision. Never did do well in math, you know.

Come Christmas morn, and Steve and I were up and panting at the tree no later than 5 a.m. No, we weren't thirsty; we were anxious to open our gifts. It took Forever for Mom & Dad to arise, and we could not open any packages until they were present for the presents. Before they'd make their appearances in the living room, there were extremely time-consuming rituals, it seemed to Steve and me. For example, going to the bathroom. Making coffee. You know, all that stuff that adults find so necessary.

Then we had to have a box or large bag ready to handle the debris from opening our gifts. Our Dad was a neat-nik and could not abide clutter. Even on Christmas morning. Not all the paper, ribbon and bows went into the trash containers though. Like all parents with odd rituals (see going to the bathroom and making coffee, above) they liked to salvage what they could so we could wrap someone else's present the next December. Also, Mom kept a list of who got what from whom so that we could write "Thank You" notes. Another tedious adult chore that we didn't appreciate at the time.

We had a lot of nice Christmas mornings with plenty of gifts. Our parents treated us well. We knew that Santa Claus had something to do with the goodies, but we appreciated our parents nonetheless.

As for other Dec. 25-type memories, I recommend re-reading O. Henry's *The Gift of the Magi*. It's a classic Christmas story that captures the spirit behind the celebration. I won't give away the plot in case you've never read the short story.

Additionally, and you probably will not be able to locate this one, another favorite Yule tale of mine is *The Christmas Tree Express*. It's set during World War II and involves some U.S. military personnel and civilians in one passenger car that's part of a long train speeding to the East Coast. The story focuses on a mother and her young son and daughter, on their way to say good-bye to Dad before he ships out on a troop transport. Only hang-up, the kids will have no Yule tree, no gifts, no Christmas. And the story goes from there as the service personnel join forces to bring Christmas to their passenger car for the little family.

Yeah, I'm a sucker for the celebration. In closing, let me drastically summarize that famous "Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus" editorial in the *New York Sun* newspaper in 1897. Virginia O'Hanlon, 8, challenged by her playmates about the existence of St. Nick, wrote a letter asking, "Is there a Santa Claus?" And Francis P. Church, an editor, responded.

"Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. No Santa Claus! Thank God that he lives, and he lives forever. A thousand years from now, nay, ten times ten thousand years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood."

Couldn't have said it better myself. Merry Christmas.

Christmas waves a magic wand over this world, and behold, everything is softer and more beautiful.

- Norman Vincent Peale -

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Telephone (541) 592-2541, FAX (541) 592-4330

Email: newsroom1@frontiernet.net or newsdesk@illinois-valley-news.com

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Staff: Michelle Binker, Zina Booth, Josiah Dean,

Millie Watkins, and Tina Grow

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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.

'Thank you' submissions are not accepted as letters.

Holiday consolation

**From Lynn Boucher-Johnson
Cave Junction**

I hope that the following view of Heaven will bring some comfort to those who have lost loved ones this year.

I see the countless Christmas trees around the world below with tiny lights, like Heaven's stars, reflecting on the snow. The sight is so spectacular, please wipe away that tear, for I am spending Christmas with Jesus Christ this year.

I hear the many Christmas songs that people hold so dear, but that music can't compare to the Christmas Choir up here. I have no words to tell you the joy their voices bring, for it is beyond description to hear the angels sing.

I know how much you miss me; I see the pain inside your heart. But I am not so far away; we really aren't apart. So be happy for me dear ones: You know I hold you dear and glad that I am spending Christmas with Jesus Christ this year.

I send you each a special gift from my heavenly home above. I send you each a memory of my undying love. After all, "Love" is the gift more precious than gold. It was always most important in the stories that Jesus told.

Please love each other, as our Father said to do, for I can't count the blessings or love He has for you. So have a Merry Christmas and wipe away that tear. Remember, I am spending Christmas with Jesus Christ this year.

747s on Main Street?

**From Ed Russell
Cave Junction**

I am a 35-year resident of rural Oregon and an eight-year resident of Illinois Valley. I have been a pilot for nearly 39 years.

I have a bachelor of science degree in aeronautical operations, and worked in "product development" for the last 10 years of my working career.

I served nearly five years on the county's Illinois Valley Airport Advisory Board. I am opposed to the "huge jet" classification for historic smokejumper base. It is a pristine jewel of all the airports in the world. It is a rare, beautiful and valuable place that we own.

I know that the first time a 747 cargo-liner flies right down Cave Junction's main street and echoes its mighty roar half-way to Grants Pass, all the people who wanted this to happen will be among the first to complain.

It will be too late. Property values? Quality of life? It's our choice. Oops, it's not: It's "the commissioners" choice.

'A real community'

**From Jill Talise
Kerby**

The letters to the editor are often the first items I read in the paper. I am amazed at how many thoughtful and knowledgeable people have come forward to address the

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important issues in our community.

I know that it takes courage to speak up. I appreciate all who have made contributions to *Illinois Valley News*. It's nice to read sensible and informative articles that raise my awareness on events in this community. More of us are showing up for public meetings, and I sense that there is a change in the air.

I am glad to see the show of support for our schools, the swim center, the library, the airport, law enforcement, and the concern for our public lands that we live next to (BLM and the forest service).

Also, the Barlow Rock issue, the Cave Junction City Council, the land development issues, the "Welcome" signs and more. I empathize with D. Wallis and her letter to the editor, "Gravel and Welcome Signs" in the Dec. 19 issue.

I believe it is important that we meet as community members and decide on what we want for the future of our community. I'm all in favor of a community forum. If we support each other we can make it happen.

Rappin' on Raffenburg

**From Robert H. Ziller
O'Brien**

Am I the only one who is sick and tired of hearing Josephine County Commissioner Jim Raffenburg's whining and ranting about what he refers to as the environmental "industry"?

Only a true fool would not be concerned about a safe living environment for himself and his family. Only a bigger fool can steadfastly ignore the fact that we can no longer continue to abuse the planet at an ever-increasing rate without finally having to endure the consequences on life as we know it during the coming decades.

Raffenburg's unwavering support of BLM's Western Oregon Plan Revision, the shady, ill-conceived under-the-table rush to "expand" Illinois Valley Airport, and various other questionable endeavors, clearly demonstrates his allegiance to the special interests, along with total contempt and disregard for the best interests and well being of his constituents.

Unless he quickly moderates his behavior in a progressive (as in progress) manner, he will surely join other "regressives" such as Australia's Prime Minister John Howard and President George W. Bush in the ranks of the unemployed (or soon to be).

Not to worry, all three should be able to find full time gainful employment as lobbyists for developers or the Extraction Industry, instead of just dabbling with it as a part-time endeavor. I'm confident that history will reflect poorly on all of them.

Wolves and meteors

**From Jim Lombardo
O'Brien**

I have been handling wolves for 45 years, first as a wild animal dealer in Los

Angeles. During the 33 years I've been in Oregon, two gray wolves have lived with me for the past 10 years.

The American name is Gray Wolf. They have nicknames. The timber wolf is from the northern U.S. to mid-Alaska. Farther north is the tundra wolf. Even farther north is the Arctic wolf, but all are called the gray wolf, or *canis lupus*.

Wolves have been given a bad rep since Red Riding Hood and the Three Little Pigs. For the record: Not one wolf has ever bitten a person.

A June *Audubon* article says that poodles are more dangerous than wolves because thousands of poodles have bitten people, and wolves haven't. It adds that people afraid of wolves should find a concrete bunker to hide from meteors.

Do wolves mate for life? They are the same as people: opportunists. They stay with the same mate until something better comes along. *Blitzer*, my timber wolf mate who's named after a TV newscaster, got mated to twins. He helped them deliver. I have never heard of a male dog helping deliver.

Most animals represented as "wolves" are Huskies with a little wolf in their background. Wolves never have their tails up over their backs. Huskies do. I have never seen a wolf with white eyes; all have amber eyes.

One Cave Junction man often brings his kids to play with our wolves.

Four states have tried to reintroduce wolves. The Idaho Anti-Wolf Coalition and the Idaho Values Alliance say that tourists stay away because they think that "wuffs will take down your kids." But a study by University of Montana reveals what wolf-watching in the Yellowstone area provides the area with \$70 million annually.

More people will come to see wolves than stay away because of them.

On three occasions my male wolf has been attacked by my German Shepherds. He grabbed one by the throat, put him to the ground, then gurgled, "Stay out of my face," and let the dog up. No,

I don't think that wolves could be introduced to Southwestern Oregon because we have too many little pigs without brick houses.

USDA advised me to call them hybrids. I will do that.

I just read an article by Jeff Barnard of The Associated Press that said wolves are finding their way into north-eastern Oregon from Idaho. I wish them the best of luck.

'WOPR hides outrage'

**From Dorothea Hover-Kramer
Cave Junction**

Despite the holiday mood that I would like to keep, I cannot help but speak out about the outrageous plan hidden within the Western Oregon Plan Revisions (WOPR) to turn much of Applegate Valley and the major Deer Creek watersheds up through Kerby into new "Off Highway Vehicle Emphasis Areas."

Off Highway Vehicles (OHV) are also known as ATVs and ORVs., and they make a lot of noise, cause significant soil erosion, and ruin quiet forest trails. It is evident that much of the recent flooding in Washington state was due to poor logging practices and OHV overuse.

Within the WOPR proposals are plans to turn over half of the 2.6 million acres public land that BLM purportedly manages into "timber management areas" that would be clear-cut every 80 years. Notably, much of the areas to be cut are in our county because this is where the remaining old-growth trees that yield the most money still stand.

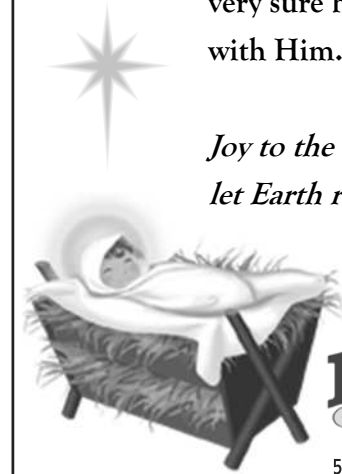
Additionally, the plan is to build 1,000 miles of new logging roads during the next decade and thus open more than 100,000 miles of forest roads to "OHV Emphasis Areas." These areas would be nationally advertised to bring enthusiasts for these destructive sports into our county.

The effects on quality of our lives, our property values, and opportunities for continuing economic development of Illinois Valley have not been considered. It is disappointing that at a time when public
(Continued on page 3)

As we come to this Christmas Season, it is our hope & prayer that all would take time to look upon & embrace the love of God toward us. He took upon Himself our brokenness & gave us a

very sure hope of time & eternity with Him.

Joy to the World, the Lord is come, let Earth receive her King!



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