

## Bob's Corner

It is time to address an issue that concerns much of the population. It is a matter of grave concern. I am speaking, of course, about Vending Machine Abuse, or VMA as it is known by many.

I first encountered VMA as a young guy working for Canteen Service in San Diego. It was (and still is) difficult to imagine why someone would cause severe damage to an innocent vending machine, costing hundreds of dollars, because (1) the desired product failed to appear after the buyer deposited his 10-cents (now 50-cents or more), (2) the wrong product fell into the slot, or (3) someone just felt like inflicting a major smash on a hunk of metal, plastic and glass that did not belong to them. The buyer was out only a dime, and one could always obtain a refund when the serviceman next made his rounds.

Then there was the situation at Camp Pendleton where three candy machines at one location were continually broken into. Persons unknown apparently were using rifle butts to smash the glass display fronts and remove the candy bars. Then they were able to infiltrate the innards of the machine, bust the shelves, and drop even more goodies. All without spending a dime.

An arrangement was worked out with the camp provost marshal. He coordinated with the medical office, and a certain substance was injected into the display items of the machines. Not long after, two men showed up at sick call with bad cramps. And the opposite condition. Mystery solved. No more VMA there.

Some might also have heard about irate persons grabbing the tops of beverage vending machines, especially those that offer cans or bottles. Each piece of equipment weighs approximately 700 pounds. So it's not a real good idea to yard on the top and get it off balance so as to make your beverage come down. Instead, the whole device could come down. On you. Could be painful.

When I worked in Brookings at the *Curry Coastal Pilot*, one of the most-constant expenses involved newspaper vending machines. People would steal them; break them open; take *all* the money (two bucks or so in quarters). Then they'd either smash the machine into handy chunks, or chuck the whole thing into the nearest river. I still can't figure why anyone would commit VMA.

OK-OK, it's frustrating to "lose" some change. Especially when you will shortly die without consuming a candy bar or gulping a soft drink. And who can handle the awful situation of desperately needing a cup of coffee, only to discover that no cup emerged, and your coffee is merrily coming out of the spout and down the drain. It's enough to make a grown person cry.

Especially when the vending company employees discover that you scratched some nasty words into the paint, or damaged the base by kicking it, or broke the plastic door. Then they cry.

VMA must be abolished.

## Weather Watch

### Cave Junction

Wednesday, Jan. 16

Mostly sunny, chilly at night

High-50 Low-18

Thursday, Jan. 17

Sunny with clouds later

High-45 Low-22

Friday, Jan. 18

Sunny

High-48 Low-25

Saturday, Jan. 19

Continued clear and cold

High-49 Low-25

Sunday, Jan. 20

Clod w/ bright sunshine

High-48 Low-26

Monday, Jan. 21

Cloudy w/some sun

High-51 Low-35

Tuesday, Jan. 22

Sunny w/ some clouds

High-50 Low-34

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

\*Fri., Jan. 4: 47 - 36 2.60

\*Sat., Jan. 5: 38 - 35 1.02

\*Sun., Jan. 6: 35 - 34 0.40

\*Mon., Jan. 7: 40 - 33 0.51

\*Tue., Jan. 8: 45 - 34 1.81

\*Wed., Jan. 9: 40 - 35 0.79

\*Thurs., Jan. 10: 51 - 39 0.55

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

\*Fri., Jan. 4: 50 - 37 2.10

\*Sat., Jan. 5: 38 - 32 0.98

\*Sun., Jan. 6: 35 - 32 0.54

\*Mon., Jan. 7: 39 - 29 0.44

\*Tue., Jan. 8: 46 - 33 0.94

\*Wed., Jan. 9: 40 - 34 0.53

\*Thurs., Jan. 10: 54 - 38 0.18

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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.)

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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.

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### Horsemen not Backwoods From Terri Sullivan O'Brien

I've been a member of Back Country Horsemen of America for years.

As I ride a mule I've been called many things, but never a Backwoods Horseman. BCH is an organization active in trying to preserve and maintain riding trails throughout the United States.

Even though I've only been a member of the Sourdough Chapter for a year, I've been impressed by the hard work that this local chapter of only 75 members has accomplished. Work includes setting up the barn display at Kerbyville Museum; maintaining and preserving the horse camp at Sam Brown Campground; helping to rebuild the horse corrals with a horse club in Crescent City; and showing up in force for a U.S. Forest Service public hearing on campground closures.

While I was pleased to see the article about our group on the front page of *Illinois Valley News* (Dec. 26, 2007) I wish that the newspaper would have called us: The Sourdough Chapter of Back Country Horsemen of Oregon, an Affiliate of Back Country Horsemen of America.

### Standing tall (and wet) From Dorothea Hover-Kramer Cave Junction

As reported by radio and TV media, the peaceful rally held Tuesday, Jan. 8 in front of BLM's Medford district office was well attended by more than 100 people despite blinding rain showers.

For an hour, citizens expressed their many concerns about the proposed Western Oregon Plan Revision (WOPR) with speeches, songs, and the handing over hundreds of petition signatures. Throughout, the attendees held the moral high ground with their willing hearts and umbrellas.

Not so for BLM. Although an official, associate district manager, Mary Smelcer, was present, those attending were generally viewed with suspicion and disdain. Despite pounding rain, the building was locked, allowing no access even to a restroom. The tour bus with one group, and which had an available restroom, was relegated to park at a considerable distance from the gathering.

Some attendees seeking shelter under the open breezeway between buildings were summarily evicted; this included a representative of the press (*Illinois Valley News*). A yellow band was then placed around the breezeway to prevent any further entry. Of course, BLM security and Medford Police stood dry under the breezeway shelter.

The right to assemble, especially when a public comment period is ending, in this case Friday, Jan. 11, is a part of American democracy. Policies that affect all of us as neighbors of BLM should indeed be extensively reviewed, studied and discussed.

One might wonder if BLM suspects that its proposals are unpopular and therefore seeks to insulate itself by use of power. One wonders if there is deep dysfunction affecting this public, tax-supported agency.

It is my hope that future

rallies can be met with more compassion for the men, women and children standing tall for democracy in torrential rain.

### I.V. Airport parameters From Ray H. Brewer Cave Junction

I have read a letter or two decrying the forthcoming advent of 747s to the former Siskiyou Smokejumper Base at Illinois Airport with some amusement.

I had a career with the FAA and worked in the N.W. Regional Office as an electrical/general engineer, and was the FAA manager of a commercial airport that couldn't handle 747s (Boise, Idaho) because of runway height and length restrictions. With that in mind, it would be ludicrous to imagine taking a 4,800-foot asphalt runway (I.V.) and changing it to one 8,000 feet long with several-foot thick high-strength concrete plus a much greater width.

Not to mention the apron area required for an airplane that size and the infrastructure to service it. How about the upgrade in lighting and electronic landing systems? All of this for an unneeded use.

I guess someone with the many millions of dollars required could waste the money, but I doubt if the FAA Airport Division could justify the waste of resources when there are upgrades elsewhere that could really benefit someone.

### O&C and recession From Don J. Smith Cave Junction

O&C is a bust; prepare for a severe recession.

As I see it, BLM's plan will not pass muster when it inevitably comes before a judge. BLM wants to increase logging under the Oregon & California Act to generate tax revenues. There are many reasons why I don't think this plan will overcome a legal challenge.

The most obvious is that protections for endangered species like salmon and for habitat like old-growth forests cover areas far beyond that of the O&C Act. And the laws to restore these species and forests apply to all these ar-

reas, including O&C land. To apply different standards to O&C land that are weaker than for the larger protected areas simply isn't legal. My hunch is that this will have turned out to have been a waste of time that succeeded only in dividing people.

Proponents of O&C rules over national laws think that by pushing the issue they can get more logging and more taxes. They are not paying attention to economic realities. Wholesale lumber prices are now half what they were a year ago. There simply is little market demand for lumber. That's why area sawmills are lengthening their temporary winter closures, and one should expect more closures in the future, some permanent.

Demand for more logging doesn't exist because the housing construction bust has taken hold and will continue for years. Way too many houses have been built, and housing prices will have to drop considerably to reduce

the glut.

Many are hoping that economic development in the valley can turn to tourism and recreation to replace resource extraction. They argue that while our nation is going into an economic slowdown, this is just a part of the business cycle and things will rebound, bringing in money to the valley from the leisure industry, if we only prepare for it.

I'm afraid they are mistaken.

Our nation is likely going into a severe and long recession. This is no typical business cycle. Not only are housing foreclosures reaching a level not seen since the Great Depression, but credit card and auto loan delinquencies are rising. Commercial real estate is starting to slam against the wall, leaving one wondering what building speculators like Larry Osborn were thinking when starting a massive building project north of town at a time when the bust is just now beginning

(Continued on page 3)

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### 5 P.M. THURSDAYS

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