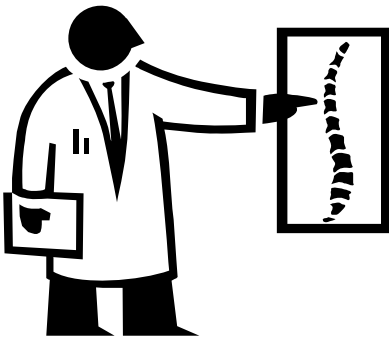


## Bob's Corner

Not taking care of one's "back" -- you know, the muscles and bones and stuff back there -- can cause problems including pain, and feelings of stupidity. The latter is true because those of us with back problems always know when we're straining or overdoing, but we think we can handle it.



My current situation, I think, began when I drove from LAX to San Diego County in a cheap rental car. No cruise control, so my right leg was extended for the whole trip. Plus, I don't think I was sitting properly. Cheap seat too.

I must relate our adventure in returning the

rented vehicle. Being a guy, I first took it to the wrong location in Carlsbad because I misread the directions. Jan was following me in our daughter's car. At one point, heading toward the proper return point, I pulled out of slow traffic, thinking Jan could follow. But I didn't account for her being blocked by other vehicles. In fact, she couldn't even see where I went. So there we were, separated in Carlsbad on Palomar Airport Road and environs including El Camino Real with those interminable traffic signals.

We finally were reunited at the airport. It took awhile because we both had gone off looking for each other after we became separated. There's more to this story, but I'm going to let it ride for now.

Anyway, before our daughter and her family returned from their trip the next day, Jan asked me to vacuum the upstairs portion of their home, where she had been cat-sitting and house-sitting. So I did, and then got the bright idea that I'd also vacuum the stairs. It was a bad idea. Mostly because the machine must weigh 50 pounds, and it was difficult to wield by hand. And back.

Then after we came back to Illinois Valley, I hauled like 10 boxes of books from the garage to the new location of our home library. I know how to pick up and carry heavy items, but, um ... well, I think I overdid it. (See "feelings of stupidity" above.) Thus, I have been dealing with a sore back, which was not helped by a total of nearly three hours aboard two separate aircraft to get back home. You know, all that sitting.

Had an "interesting" experience in Portland while waiting for the flight to Medford. As I moved to sit in the waiting area, stepping over my bag and turning simultaneously, my sciatica kicked in. I was stuck in a half-sitting/half-standing (half-ass?) position. Fortunately, the condition diminished enough after a minute or two so that I could sit without too much pain. My crouching posture must have presented quite a sight.

Now I'm wearing a pillow between my knees every night when I prepare to sleep. Doc Nordal recommended that to help alleviate the sciatic condition. Plus, a good massage helps a lot. How am I doing? I'll get back to you.

Pain is never permanent. - Saint Teresa of Avila

## Weather Watch

### Cave Junction

Wednesday, Feb. 27

Cloudy  
High--59 Low--28



Thursday, Feb. 28

Cloudy  
High--63 Low--33



Friday, Feb. 29

Cloudy with chance of rain  
High--56 Low--29



Saturday, March 1

Clouds with sunshine  
High--50 Low--28



Sunday, March 2

Cloudy  
High--57 Low--29



Monday, March 3

Clouds with sunshine  
High--61 Low--40



Tuesday, March 4

Sunny and warmer  
High--67 Low--41



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

|          |         |    |    |     |
|----------|---------|----|----|-----|
| *Fri.,   | Feb. 15 | 56 | 28 | .00 |
| *Sat.,   | Feb. 16 | 58 | 29 | .00 |
| *Sun.,   | Feb. 17 | 57 | 29 | .00 |
| *Mon.,   | Feb. 18 | 60 | 28 | .00 |
| *Tue.,   | Feb. 19 | 50 | 32 | .24 |
| *Wed.,   | Feb. 20 | 56 | 37 | .05 |
| *Thurs., | Feb. 21 | 41 | 39 | .04 |

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

|          |         |    |    |     |
|----------|---------|----|----|-----|
| *Fri.,   | Feb. 15 | 61 | 26 | .01 |
| *Sat.,   | Feb. 16 | 62 | 27 | .00 |
| *Sun.,   | Feb. 17 | 62 | 29 | .01 |
| *Mon.,   | Feb. 18 | 64 | 27 | .00 |
| *Tue.,   | Feb. 19 | 50 | 30 | .14 |
| *Wed.,   | Feb. 20 | 57 | 34 | .00 |
| *Thurs., | Feb. 21 | 51 | 34 | .05 |

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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.

\* \* \*

### Renewable energy project From Jennifer Krauss Phillippi & Link Phillippi Rough & Ready Lumber Co. Cave Junction

All of us at Rough & Ready appreciate our community for the incredible support we received in the building of our cogeneration plant. After a long, complicated process that began some three years ago, 1,500 homes (the equivalent of ) are being brightened with home-made, locally grown, renewable electricity.

We hesitate to burden readers with too much information about our reasons for constructing the plant, but so much interest has been shown and so many questions asked that we thought a quick rundown of how it all happened might be in order.

One day as we sat in our office across the street from the 2002 still-smoking Biscuit Fire, wondering whether we had a future as a sawmill in Illinois Valley, the once only dreamed of idea for a co-generation plant began to grow. We considered that, while the loss of our historical access to local federal timber had created a seemingly insurmountable problem, that same proximity to the federal lands might somehow provide an opportunity for us.

As the importance of forest thinning and restoration began to be widely talked about, we imagined how satisfying it would be to help restore those forests that we, like many in our community and elsewhere, have spent our lives in.

As the next couple of years passed, the idea of a co-generation plant developed further. Drying enough lumber for our customers has always been a challenge, and in recent years more and more products are being sold dry. Our small company had not been able to upgrade our boiler and dry kilns until we considered co-generation.

With it, a revenue stream from selling electricity would be added to the extra value we would get from selling more dry lumber. Not only do customers pay more for dry lumber, but it is considerably less expensive to ship because more dry lumber can be loaded on a truck. Essentially you're not paying to ship all that water.

So now, co-generation was sounding promising, but the staggering expense of such a plant was still a stretch for us. Then, it seemed that all our stars lined up. As support for renewable energy and forest restoration grew, so did state, federal and private grants and incentives.

We worked hard to access these, and were successful on many fronts. This assistance took us "over the top" and made the project feasible.

Although the lumber market is terrible right now, traditionally all our large projects have been built in market downturns. That is a time when construction is less expensive and production disruptions have less effect because markets are poor.

Producing power and adding value to our lumber will give us the best chance to get through this market downturn, and poises us to take great advantage of the market when it turns around. Our family philosophy of

reinvesting profits into the business has been critical to our long existence. Upgrading our processes and refocusing in a changing world have kept us afloat in a highly competitive industry.

So, a few years after our early imaginings, it is exciting to see them realized today.

Our boiler is producing steam for our 12 dry kilns and, at the same time, spinning the turbine and making clean electricity. The U.S. Forest Service and BLM are offering local stewardship and thinning projects that will revitalize forests and bring biomass to our plant. Lumber customers are calling about purchasing dry lumber, and several lumber manufacturers are inquiring about custom drying.

Our main business continues to be producing high-quality lumber which is now enhanced by our drying capacity, but obviously this all hinges on our ability to produce that lumber in the first place. Access to a local, affordable log supply is crucial to our continued operation and our ability to contribute to the "three-legged stool" of forest health, economic vitality, and renewable energy.

And most satisfying to us, it provides the chance to sustain the 85 jobs of the talented, honest, hard-working Rough & Ready employees, without whom we wouldn't exist at all.

### 'Green' bad meat From Glenn Sander Selma

It seems that the government has recalled 143 million pounds of beef -- enough for 570 million quarter-pounders.

This meat recall business is chillingly profiled in *Men's Health* magazine. Writer Tom Groenberg reports that last year, 30 million pounds of ground beef were recalled for possible *E. coli* contamination. This comes after the Dept. of Agriculture in 2005 issued a report stating that the number of *E. coli* infections had actually decreased 42 percent from 1996 to 2004.

Last year, the USDA's undersecretary for food safety said that the problem is growing. "The amount of product we test that's positive has gone up about 33 percent from that past three years."

What's the reason for the increase? Groenberg says it may be the green movement.

As corn prices have skyrocketed, partly because of a growing demand for ethanol, Bossie is increasingly being fed a diet of distiller's grains, a byproduct of the ethanol process.

A Kansas State prof says that such cattle carry a two-fold increase in the incidence of an *E. coli* strain. "When you change their feed, their intestinal flora change," said

the USDA safety expert.

Another factor: changes in weather patterns have frequently flooded feedlots, leaving the cattle to walk through a fetid brine of their own waste that becomes a residue on their hides when shipped for slaughter.

### Co-generation negative view From Don Smith Cave Junction

According to an article about the newly constructed co-generation plant at Rough & Ready Lumber Co., it will "generate heat to dry lumber and create electricity" used to operate the mill by burning slash after logging.

The article says that the new building cost \$5 million, with slightly less than half the cost paid for by public and private grants. The article continues that "the mill is surrounded by 2 million acres of forest, mostly public, that are in need of fuels reduction and thinning."

Presumably, revenues from logging these public lands are expected to cover the remaining cost of building the plant. But there's a problem here. According to mill owner Link Phillippi, the new plant "has been a little scary for us," since this "is one of the worst lumber markets we've ever seen."

So there it is, the weak link in the chain. Let's take a look at it. With another \$2,550,000 needed to cover expenses, the mill is confronted with paying off a huge amount of the construction cost while revenues are going down with lumber prices falling through the floor and demand drying up.

And if that weren't bad

enough, the cost for corporations to borrow is climbing fast. The dilemma is quite obvious, isn't it? Expenses pile up at a time when lumber markets are about as bad as Phillippi has ever seen.

One should expect processing logs at the mill to slow significantly as the demand for lumber plummets further, which is a given, as the housing market crash is just now taking hold. It would be ironic, to say the least, if it turns out that a plant built to generate electricity to dry lumber sits idle because there is no lumber to dry.

Any lessons here? For one, don't load up on debt at just the time the economy is nose-diving, going head-first into a deep nationwide recession. We might see some layoffs at Rough & Ready, as the burden of carrying the debt for the new building gets heavier and heavier. Who knows, as economic conditions get much worse, the mill may even be forced to close.

In either case, one can expect Rough & Ready's owners to say that the problem is they didn't have access to public lands due to those pesky environmentalists.

The real problem is that a business decision was made at a time when that decision was about as ill conceived as could be. The mill owners will look far and wide to find scapegoats, but in the end they'll play the same old blame game, rather than facing up to their own mistakes. (Editor's Note: The letter-writer is not the Don Smith of Don Smith Construction, but a former Siskiyou Project executive director.)

## Clarification

In the Feb. 20 issue:

\*A page 12 story, "SCHC hires a new COO," was missing part of a news release supplied by Siskiyou Community Health Center. The complete statement at the end of the story should have read, " ... SCHC is able to treat patients regardless of their ability to pay. A sliding fee scale is provided for people who have no insurance."

\*A letter from Roger Brandt on page 3, "Airport items noted," should have included an explanation that the commentary originally was written by Brandt to Wally Aiken, and that subsequently the material was edited by publisher Bob Rodriguez to become a letter to the editor.

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