

Bob's Corner

For this issue I offer part of an email sent to me, stating that the list of inanities is from something called the Darwin Awards. You can figure what that means, and you can decide how much truth there is to what I've included. At least they're entertaining, and besides, they saved me some work:

*When his .38-caliber revolver failed to fire at his intended victim during a hold-up in Long Beach, Calif., a would-be robber did something that can only inspire wonder. He peered down the barrel and tried the trigger again. This time it worked.

*After stopping for drinks at an illegal bar, a Zimbabwean bus driver found that the 20 mental patients he was supposed to be transporting from Harare to Bulawayo had escaped. Not wanting to admit his incompetence, the driver offered everyone waiting at a nearby bus stop a free ride. Then he delivered the passengers to the mental hospital, telling the staff that the patients were excitable and prone to bizarre fantasies. The deception wasn't discovered for three days.

*An American teen-ager was in a hospital recovering from serious head wounds suffered in a railroad train incident. As to how he sustained the injuries, the lad told police that he was trying to see how close he could get his head to a moving train before he was hit.

*In a Louisiana convenience store, a man put a \$20 bill on the counter and asked for change. When the clerk opened the register, the man pulled a gun and asked for all the cash, which the man took from the clerk and fled, leaving the \$20 bill on the counter. The total amount he got from the register was \$15. (If someone points a gun at you and gives you money, is a crime committed?)

*It seems that an Arkansas guy wanted some beer pretty badly. He decided to throw a cinder block through a liquor store window, grab some cans, and run. He lifted the cinder block and heaved it over his head at the window. The block bounced back and hit the would-be thief on the head, knocking him unconscious. The liquor store window was made of Plexiglas. The whole event was caught on videotape.

*The *Ann Arbor News* crime column reported that a man walked into a Burger King in Ypsilanti, Mich. at 5 a.m., flashed a gun, and demanded cash. The clerk turned him down because he said that he couldn't open the cash register without a food order. When the man ordered onion rings, the clerk said they weren't available for breakfast. The man, frustrated, walked away.

*When a man attempted to siphon gasoline from a motor home parked on a Seattle street, he got much more than he bargained for. Police found a very sick man curled up next to a motor home near spilled sewage. An officer said that the man admitted to trying to steal fuel, but that he plugged his siphon hose into the motor home's sewage tank by mistake. The owner of the vehicle declined to press charges, saying that it was the best laugh he'd ever had.

So there are some of the "award-winners." Take 'em or leave 'em; I had fun providing them.



Christina Duane Singer/Songwriter

Christina's special music focuses on the history of Oregon. She'll be singing songs from her new release "Oh Oregon". CDs will be available for purchase.

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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 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.

Wilderness user rights From Gabe Howe Ashland

A recent Friday was the first time using the Rough & Ready trailhead for me, as in the past I've just hiked the creek bed from Hwy. 199. After arriving at the creek, in only a few minutes we saw a cougar cross the old road we were on, disappearing up the ridge; its seemingly quiet footsteps a testament to the abundance of macro-wildlife in a post-fire habitat.

From the creek we could not spot the trail, but headed in its general direction, eventually running into it. (There is no signage). We followed its path up a hill, back down to the creek. On the way down we traversed the creek bank, sometimes ending up in the water. When we arrived, the sky was clear, and at about the half-way point it started raining. The change in the creek's flow was noticeable after just a few minutes of rain hitting the basin; a wild creek indeed.

This is such a great area for people to watch post-fire recovery in action, without a long hike or risky drive. The legacy of old cedars, spared by the Biscuit Fire, tower above near the creek side. Hospitable soil harbors dense conifer seedlings and shrubbery. Single pines squeeze out of colorful rock, leaving a hiker curious as to how anything could grow here: 200 million+ years of evolution might have something to do with it.

Highlighting this area as wildlife habitat may turn some heads. Seven years after the Biscuit, the plants sought by bear and deer are abundant. Not only did the fire free the shrubbery from a light-diffusing canopy, it made accessibility for wildlife much easier. They can get around in a wilderness that was before restricted by dense vegetation. We have been really surprised by the amount of scat and other indicators of wildlife in the area. I'm just surprised that there weren't any hunters out there.

The riparian zones were also of notable importance. Even during a shower, R&R runs clear. The small tributaries spitting into it run even clearer. Some rather large Darlingtonia groves can be found here, bugs buzzing, unknowingly lured by predator. Fall colors absolutely brilliant in areas that may be completely dry during the summer. It's a riparian zone oasis in a landscape where water never stays long.

Inclusion of this basin into the Kalmiopsis Wilderness would be only natural. There are limitless opportunities for recreation in an area easy to reach. The chance to witness natural post-fire recovery for those inclined to stay closer to main roads, and scientists uninterested in a challenging hike. Game opportunities are vast, a reserve for those with aspirations of bagging a buck come fall.

Mining proponent Ron Gibson joked about there being fish in a wild creek that goes dry in late summer. But I'd be surprised if there weren't Coho running in R&R. Fishermen tell me the same.

On the way back down a reminder of the times took the

form of a 4+ foot stick jetting from a rock pile. An ambitious claim stake in an area once heavily mined, and a symbol of a gold rush 150 years old. A history reignited by vast unemployment and the rising price of precious metals.

As a wilderness user, I will return to this area my entire life. I will come in search of Darlingtonias, clear water, and mountain lions. In a boom-and-bust world, I don't think we can say the same for the miners (and mining companies) who have interest in areas like R&R.

When the price of gold goes back down, the Wild Rivers area will again lend itself to abandonment, but I will remain a dutiful visitor. Shouldn't loyalty to the land have some standing when policy decisions about this area are being made? The interests of those who want access to the minerals now (maybe not yesterday, and maybe not tomorrow; but now) should be superseded by the interests of those who accessed the backcountry yesterday.

And who will visit it today? And who will be there tomorrow? It's easy to forget that after the price of gold stabilizes, these wild areas will still be here. The question is, in what state?

Shame on the destroyers From Shannon Wilson Selma

On the way back from Bigelow Lakes along Grayback Creek Road I noticed freshly logged and underburned areas. It seems that the U.S. Forest Service and a logging outfit spent considerable time, effort, and expense in an attempt to preserve the thousands of 20- to 40-year-old Port Orford cedars before they under-burned it.

Anyone who knows young white cedar will tell you that it doesn't have thick bark to withstand fire. It seems that the forest service forgot this little detail and killed 90 to 100 percent of the Port Orford cedars during the under-burn.

Here is another strange occurrence that baffles me. While the Illinois River, its larger tributaries, and all fish in it are suffering from very low water levels during the summer, one outfit that has a mission to protect local ecosystems and rivers is pumping water out of one of the more prominent creeks to water fields to graze cows. This also leads to run-off that is full of cow fertilizer likely running into the creek. As I recall, this has been going on for several years now.

Furthermore, those individuals who continue to clear-cut and spray poisonous herbicides on some of the least-productive tree-growing soils and climates in Oregon — which is most of Illinois Valley — should be ashamed of destroying and poisoning their neighbors' environments.

I would hope that these entities will cease and desist from these type of destructive and ill-advised activities for all their neighbors' sakes at the very least.

Justice or injustice? From Jondalynn Ballard Cave Junction

I am truly concerned about our law enforcement in Illinois Valley and want to share a couple of stories.

Last November, my home was broken into, and I was assaulted by a man. I fought my attacker, and when I saw him leave I dialed 911 immediately. I told the woman on the phone what just happened to me, gave her my address, and asked her to send help as soon as possible.

Instead of saying, "Help

is on the way," the dispatcher proceeded to tell me that she had no one on duty at the moment and that I would have to wait until an officer was available. After telling her that I couldn't wait, she told me, "Well, I do have someone on call, I guess. I could give them a call."

I was so outraged I told her to call him, and then I hung up. I got my law enforcement officer two hours later. Needless to say, they did catch the guy, and I am grateful, but I wish that the dispatcher would have been more reassuring.

My second story is about this last Halloween. It was 8:30, after dark, a mile and a half down Rockydale Road, when my friend was "pulled over: by a deputy. Because of lack of insurance they impounded my friend's vehicle. In doing that, they left my friend stranded in the middle of the night, on a dark road, and refused to give her a ride home or back into town.

What made matters worse is that my friend was taking her son, 6, and his two friends, 7 and 11, "Trick or Treating" that night and left them stranded as well. With no car and no way to get home, my friend had to take the three kids to the nearest house and try to find a ride. I am truly outraged that they would do something like that.

On a street with no lights, on a night with crazy people out, and in the middle of nowhere they leave a woman and three young children all alone to fend for themselves.

Are they here to "Protect and Serve" or are they here to "Confiscate and Abandon?"

Is this behavior OK? From David Scott Conas Cave Junction

I am writing in reference to a situation at my home on Wednesday, Nov. 11.

I own Rottweilers that are good dogs. They stay in my yard, and I do my best to be a responsible pet owner. My dogs have had to be chained for the past few months because one of my neighbors has a couple of pit bulls that more often than not get out of the area they are supposed to be.

My big male has a place under my mobile that is his spot when he is chained. I returned from work day before yesterday to find that one of the Rotties had his chain wrapped around a fence post, and every time he moved he was being shocked by the hot fence where my horses are. And my female was wrapped around a tree so tight that she couldn't move either.

My big male was lying motionless. I called his name, and noted that he was exhausted and that his head was bloody. The other two dogs were obviously trying to get to him to help him.

I feel that the two pit bulls from next door came into my yard once again and attacked my big male while on his chain. Of course I was livid. I called my vet and took

my dog to Crossroads Animal Hospital shortly thereafter. I had been told I would have to pay for the services rendered and then collect from the neighbors because their pit bulls had come into my yard to get at my Rottie.

When the neighbor returned I went over with bill in hand and knocked on their door to let them know of the situation, the woman of the house began screaming for me to get off their property while her husband came to the door with a pistol and fired five shots at me.

The neighbors heard the gun shots and called 911.

Six deputies arrived and were told that he did not fire shots at me. Well, needless to say, they had picked up all the shells, but missed one, so the deputies did find that one. He was arrested, (cited on a charge of felon in possession of a firearm). However, the next morning he was out of jail. When I asked about this I was told that he was released due to over-crowding.

From what I have always understood, persons charged with violent crimes were not to be released for over-crowding. This seems a little odd to me. A few years ago I remember that there was an accidental shooting in my neighborhood. One shot fired accidentally; a person died; and the shooter went to prison for 15 years.

He was an ex-felon in possession of a firearm. He was trying to make a burl handle for the gun for his girlfriend; there was a bullet in the gun that no one knew about; and the trigger guard had been lost. It was a horrible situation.

What I am trying to get across is the fact that the neighbor accused of pulling the pistol and shooting at me intentionally was released due to over-crowding. I could have easily been shot, and I am stating as fact that this guy is an ex-felon in possession of a firearm with children in the home.

The only thing I have ever asked of them is to please be responsible pet owners. My children are now scared to go in front of their house to get to the school bus because of their daddy being shot at, and dogs attacking their dog. We live at the end of a cul-de-sac, so that is the only way my children can get to the bus. This is totally uncalled for.

The situation has gotten blown way out of proportion, and it is easy to see how people get to the point of rage. I truly believe that the sheriff's office is sending a message that it is OK to have this kind of behavior for some and not others. Where do you draw the line?

Toler does not 'bicker' From Kate Dwyer Cave Junction

When someone tells you that cows are green you wonder if they've seen something you've missed or if they're full of hooley.

(Continued on page 3)

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