



Life in the Valley of Riches

By DAN MANCUSO,
Publisher

I lost my phone while out cutting wood last Friday. Fortunately, no one picked it up and sent random texts to my children.

The first day or two was pretty tough. I have become so reliant on my BlackBerry that I was totally lost. By the time Sunday came around, it seemed I had gotten over it. It was actually kind of peaceful not having it ping and ring all day long.

In today's world we have data coming at us from all directions. Work email, personal email, texts, RSS news feeds, Facebook and Twitter. What did we ever do before Google? My fear is that as a species we are dumbing down. Don't know the answer to something? Google it. No thought or logic is needed to type a question and get instant gratification.

Having everything at our fingertips may seem like a cool thing and, at times, it's quite useful. But, is it good for us? I think not. I feel we are also shortening our attention span with 20-second news spots on broadcast media and bloggers feeding us bits and pieces of information in such small doses. It worries me that many people won't have the attention span to read a

full article in the future.

Another problem I have with the web is people are losing the skill of holding actual conversations. We have reverted back to junior high on many Facebook posts. The things I see some people post makes me shake my head. Face-to-face, they would not dare to say these things, but hiding behind the monitor, many people seem to lose common decency and become downright brutal.

Anyway, I digress. Back to my missing phone which I know longer actually missed. I think that my resolution for 2015 will be to not touch my phone one day a week. It's doubtful I will succeed, but it's worth a try.

I also would like to thank all of you for picking up the paper each week. And, as always, thanks to all of our advertisers. Without you, none of this would be possible.

Happy New Year to all ~djm

Big Brothers for Cows: by Annette McGee Rasch

If I were in charge, Earth's "New World Order" would be staffed with scientists, historians, counselors, environmentalists, teachers, children, storytellers, animals, spiritual people, healers, plants and dog trainers.

This global leadership would exclude lawyers, CEO's, lobbyists, high-level government officials, generals, popes and politicians. For these folks, I'd designate a special social rehabilitation program: The Big Brothers for Cows. Or simply: The BBFC.

But before getting into the BBFC, let me

say that the New World Order wouldn't tolerate chemicals, GMO's, sloppy nuclear activity, old-growth logging, fracking or indiscriminate burning of fossil fuels. Bans on human activities that increase global warming, pollution, habitat destruction and extinction would be strictly enforced. After all, humans have evolved plenty enough to better utilize more of their minds and far less of Earth's flesh and blood to satisfy the hungry practical needs of civilizations.

There'd just be one rule: if any proposed human activity hurts other life forms, you can't

do it – not without super-solid justification that passes the scrutiny of bio-regional boards that report directly to the New World Order.

Though obviously, the immediate end of planes, trains, ocean tankers and gas-guzzling vehicles would cramp global bio-restoration during the transition to better technologies. Yet the wetlands can't wait – they need reviving now! All those pesky dams must be removed, not to mention the badly located cities and leaking landfills that require extraction from the flesh of Our Mother.

No worries - we'll simply call the BBFC! That's right, the Big Brothers for Cows! Let the recycling begin!

Since the New World Order decides it's wrong to breed, imprison, torture and then butcher animals so humans can consume their flesh - the meat industry is sunk. This moral decision is backed by sound economics: as it takes 10 to 20 pounds of grain to produce one pound of beef – an awful waste of land and water.

Letters to the Editor

Illinois Valley News welcomes Letters to the Editor. Please e-mail them to dan@illinois-valley-news.com

POLICY ON LETTERS:

'Illinois Valley News' encourages letters to the editor provided they are legible and not libelous or scurrilous. All letters must be signed, including name, address and telephone number. The latter need not be published, but will be used to verify authenticity. The "News" reserves the right to edit letters. Letters are used at the discretion of the publisher.

(Editor's Note: Views and commentary, including statements made as fact are strictly those of the letter writers.)

Monument Expansion Not Unfair to Timber and Mining

For more than 20 years I have heard opposition to the expansion of Oregon Caves based on claims that this is unfair to timber and mine.

Consider these facts:

I have hiked through Lake Creek and Cave Creek canyons and have found no evidence of historic gold mining in this watershed since the time the Oregon gold rush 160 years ago. Most of this watershed was filled with rocks and boulders from landslides during the 1964 flood so a prospector looking for gold would have to dig through 2-6 feet of nothing to get to a place where nothing significant has been found for 160 years. How is taking

nothing unfair?

Satellite images show Oregon Caves surrounded by a region of old and new clear cuts. Look anywhere in Oregon's 30 million acres of forestland and you will find an ocean of logging impacts surrounding tiny islands of wilderness and parks. In approximate proportions, it appears the timber industry has 95% and the travel and recreation industry has 5% and expansion of the monument is called unfair.

National Parks are found in just

about every country and the world understands this is where you find a nation's hallmark recreational, scenic, and cultural resources. The expansion makes us a stronger competitor in the two trillion dollar global travel market and the one trillion dollar USA travel market. Show me a mining or timber operation that can take 4,000 acres of land and permanently create an opportunity of this magnitude.

**Roger Brandt
Cave Junction**

Get SMART with books

Winter break is right around the corner, and holidays can get pretty hectic! Routines can fly out the window with celebrations, travel and out-of-town guests. As your family prepares for the holidays, use these tips for keeping kids engaged in learning and reading over winter break.

Read for fun! Whether your child is in the mood for holiday stories or the newest installment from a favorite series, winter break provides the perfect opportunity to set aside school books and read for fun. Make time for bedtime stories to create the routine and enjoy books on a daily basis.

Stock up on books at the local library. Help your child pick out books they're interested in reading over the winter break. Libraries may also have fun, free holiday activities throughout the break.

Make the most of travel time. Turn travel time to or from a holiday get-together into an opportunity to practice reading. You can look for license plates from different states, try to find the alphabet on the license plates, or count the number of red (or white or green) cars you see. Read street signs and

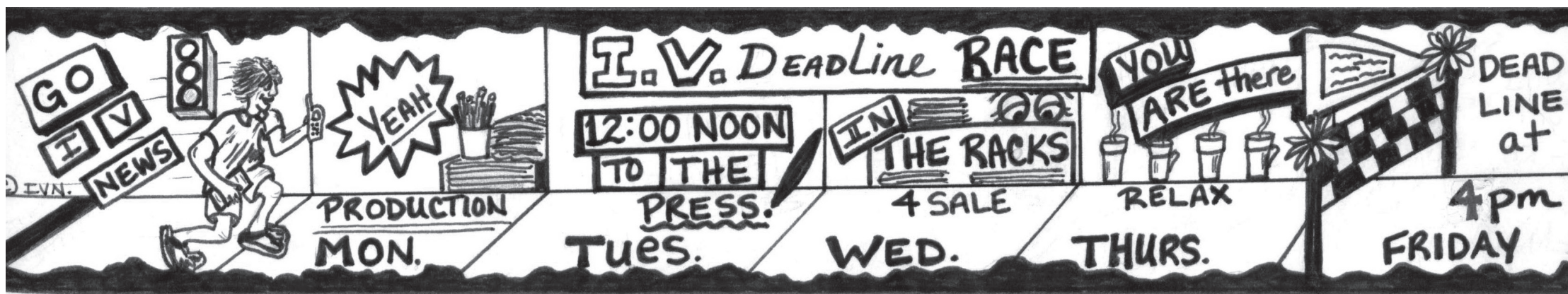
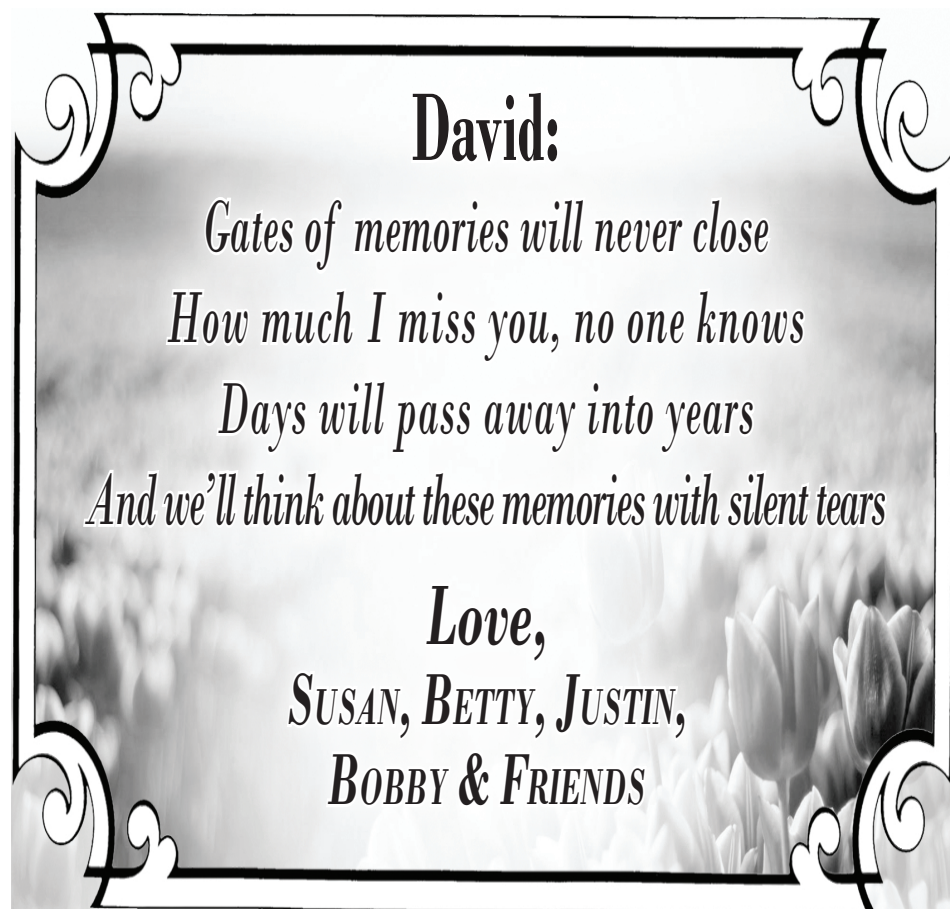
billboards you see along the way.

Create a new tradition. A little predictability is comforting for kids. Starting a special Winter Break Story Time can be a new tradition that links reading with happy memories. Hot cocoa and your favorite stories will have the whole family feeling comfy and cozy, while creating memories that will last a lifetime.

Remember, you don't have to be an expert to help your child with reading. By simply interacting with children around books, you can show them that books are important and worthy of our attention. These tips came to you from SMART, the local non-profit that places volunteers in schools to help children learn to read. At SMART, we believe every child should be able to read. With your help, they can.

Each year, SMART reaches thousands of Oregon children with vital one-on-one reading support, and books for those who need them most.

For more information please visit <http://www.getsmartoregon.org/>.



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Save The Date For more listings go to www.ivcalendar.org

Jan. 3

Young Master Gardeners will meet and explore beneficial bugs in the garden on Friday, Jan. 3 at 2:30 p.m. at the I.V. Branch of Josephine County Library on Palmer St. All children 6-12 yrs. old are welcome to attend this free presentation,

younger siblings are also invited (with parents) to attend.

Jan. 5

The January Senior Talk will take place Monday, Jan. 5 at noon at the I.V. Senior Center, 520 E. River St. This free presentation is open to the public. Learn how and

why you should appoint a substitute decision maker when you can't speak for yourself. Includes: Power of Attorney, Advance Directives, fiduciary services and more.

Jan. 7

All are welcome at Cave Junction's Seventh Day Adventist Church's Open

House. Wednesday, Jan. 7, 6 p.m. (each day except Wednesdays at 5 p.m. until Friday the 16th) Matthew 18:19 "Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask be done for them of my Father which is in heaven." May God Bless

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