

The Plaques of E Clampus Vitus: by Sublime Grand Noble Humbug Bill Wensrich

Yreka Western Railroad

The Plaques of E Clampus Vitus--Humbug Chapter No. 73
The 21st in a continuing series of articles prepared by Bill Wensrich.
“If you ain’t plaque’n, then you ain’t Clampin’”

Dan Weimers served as Humbug Chapter 73’s 18th Noble Grand Humbug in 1990. Dan recently passed to the Golden Hills in 2011. Phil Pepperdine, another Humbug Chapter XNGH said of Dan:
“Dan was the real work horse and historian for Chapter 73. Most of the plaques were “worded” by him. He and Mac McKellar put on twelve annual Plaque Treks and Siskiyou County Historical Tours between 1988 and 1999. He was very instrumental in the Oregon Chapter, starting in the early 90s.”
The Yreka Railroad plaque, located at the end of Center Street at the depot, was Dan’s plaque. He did the research and work to make the monument happen. A small dedication ceremony was held in September 1990. Knowing Dan, I’m sure he pontificated on more history than you wanted to know in one day.

Southern Pacific Company, part of the Central Pacific, began building their leg of the Oregon and California Railroad through the Sacramento Valley in the early 1870s. It would eventually connect just south of Ashland, Oregon. Samuel Montague, Central Pacific’s chief engineer, planned to bring the railroad to Yreka guaranteeing the town continued prosperity. He died in 1883. Looking for a lower cost route, Southern Pacific resurveyed Shasta Valley. Citizens of Yreka were stunned when Central Pacific Railroad announced their decision to continue the rail line north through what would become the City of Montague.
In response to the SP decision to bypass Yreka and run the mainline through Shasta Valley and Montague, City Fathers quickly built their own railroad. This now famous short line runs six miles from Yreka to Montague. It became known as the Yreka Western. Fares of four bits for a one-way trip to Montague and 75¢ for a round trip were the going rate at the time.
The very first carload of freight ever shipped over the tracks of the Yreka Western Railroad was an SP box car filled with apples from the Forest Home orchard. The new railway made this run with one Baldwin engine Jan. 9, 1889. A local newspaper column best

illustrates the euphoria of the day.
“The new engine of the YRR is in fine running order, and will prove a very serviceable iron horse to pull as long a train as the best locomotive in the country. After blowing it out a number of times, she runs very smooth and as the weight of the boiler and water tank is principally over the driving wheels, it can pull a tremendous load.”
In those days the train came across Yreka Creek to a depot located between Main and Broadway Streets. Severe floods in the 1890s continually washed away tracks running across the creek. After several repairs and truss replacements, the current depot was opened in 1910.
A large portion of railroad revenue came from passenger service between Yreka and Montague. As the dawn of the automobile age turned to daylight, passenger service declined dramatically after 1915 when Model T Fords had become ubiquitous. In 1920 the railroad was sold back to the citizens of Yreka. They operated the line until 1928 and then sold it to the Klamath River Holding company. With the onset of the Great Depression the railroad was placed into receivership in 1935.
In terrible condition, the Yreka Western made a slow but steady recovery in the

receiver’s able hands. By 1948 the line prospered by hauling lumber and freight to its connection with SP in Montague.
The early 1980s saw profits declining along with a fading local lumber industry. The loss of its lumber customer coupled with trucking industry deregulation began to spell the end of the Yreka Western. Quick thinking Yreka City Fathers again came up with another good idea. A summer excursion train to be called “The Blue Goose” was born. The first Blue Goose ran the rails in 1986. Breathing new life again, the Yreka Western provided the city with a truly unique short line railroad. Having continuously operated for over 120 years, an aging engine in need of major repairs resulted in a wonderful era coming to an end a few years ago when the Blue Goose excursion train ceased operation.
Bill Wensrich serves on the E Clampus Vitus Board of Directors. His recently published Guide Book for the ECV Transierra Roisterous Alliance of Senior Humbugs titled The Trail to Sailors’ Diggin’s from Paragon Bay is available for purchase from the non-profit Del Norte County Historical Society at their Museum located at 577 H Street in Crescent City, California.

Today in History: by The Associated Press

Today is Wednesday, July 25, the 206th day of 2018. There are 159 days left in the year.

Today’s Highlight in History:
On July 25, 1994, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Jordan’s King Hussein (hoo-SAYN’) signed a declaration at the White House ending their countries’ 46-year-old formal state of war.

On this date:
In 1866, Ulysses S. Grant was named General of the Army of the United States, the first officer to hold the rank.
In 1917, Nikon Corp. had its beginnings with the merger of three optical manufacturers in Japan.
In 1943, Benito Mussolini was dismissed as premier of Italy by King Victor Emmanuel III, and placed under arrest. (However, Mussolini was later rescued by the Nazis, and re-asserted his authority.)

In 1946, the United States detonated an atomic bomb near Bikini Atoll in the Pacific in the first underwater test of the device.
In 1952, Puerto Rico became a self-governing commonwealth of the United States.
In 1956, the Italian liner SS Andrea Doria collided with the Swedish passenger ship Stockholm off the New England coast late at night and began sinking; 51 people — 46 from the Andrea Doria, five from the Stockholm — were killed. (The Andrea Doria capsized and sank the following morning.)
In 1960, a Woolworth’s store in Greensboro, North Carolina, that had been the scene of a sit-in protest against its whites-only lunch counter dropped its segregation policy.
In 1961, in a televised address on the Berlin Crisis, President John F. Kennedy announced a series of steps aimed at bolstering the military in the face of Soviet demands that Western powers withdraw from the German city’s western sector.

In 1972, the notorious Tuskegee syphilis experiment came to light as The Associated Press reported that for the previous four decades, the U.S. Public Health Service, in conjunction with the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, had been allowing poor, rural black male patients with syphilis to go without treatment, even allowing them to die, as a way of studying the disease.
In 1984, Soviet cosmonaut Svetlana Savitskaya (sah-VEETS’-kah-yah) became the first woman to walk in space as she carried out more than three hours of experiments outside the orbiting space station Salyut 7.
In 2000, a New York-bound Air France Concorde crashed outside Paris shortly after takeoff, killing all 109 people on board and four people on the ground; it was the first-ever crash of the supersonic jet.
In 2002, Zacarias Moussaoui (zak-uh-REE’-uhs moo-SOW’-ee) declared he was guilty of conspiracy in the September 11

attacks, then dramatically withdrew his plea at his arraignment in Alexandria, Va.

Ten years ago: An oxygen tank exploded aboard a Qantas Boeing 747-400, ripping a hole in the fuselage and forcing an emergency landing in the Philippines. President George W. Bush signed an executive order expanding sanctions against individuals and organizations in Zimbabwe associated with the regime of President Robert Mugabe. Computer science professor Randy Pausch (powsh), whose “last lecture” about facing terminal cancer became an Internet sensation and a best-selling book, died in Chesapeake, Va. at age 47. The Federal Communications Commission formally approved Sirius Satellite Radio Inc.’s \$3.3 billion buyout of rival XM Satellite Radio Holdings Inc. California became the first state to ban trans fats from restaurant food.

Five years ago: Pope Francis, dubbed the “slum pope” for his work with the poor, received a rapturous welcome from one of Rio de Janeiro’s most violent shantytowns and demanded the world’s wealthy end the injustices that had left the poor on the margins of society.

One year ago: A bitterly-divided Senate voted to move forward with Republican legislation to repeal and replace “Obamacare.” Sen. John McCain, returning to the Capitol for the first time since he was diagnosed with brain cancer, cast a decisive “yes” vote. (Three days later, McCain joined with two other Republican senators and Democrats in defeating the repeal effort.) House Majority Whip Steve Scalise, who was critically wounded in a shooting at a baseball practice on June 14, was released from a Washington hospital.



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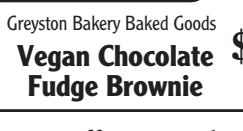
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