

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

The River Highway

The Plaques of E Clampus Vitus—Umpqua Joe Chapter No. 1859
The 45th in a continuing series of articles prepared by Bill Wensrich
“If you ain’t plaque’n, then you ain’t Clampin’”

The weekend of Oct. 20, 2012, was a typical Oregon fall day. Scattered showers and partly sunny skies provided a clear weather window for the Umpqua Joe Chapter of E Clampus Vitus to dedicate its River Highway plaque.

Before the era of railroads and automobiles, steamboats on the Coquille River were the major mode of transportation from Bandon to Coquille and Myrtle Point in southern Coos County, Oregon. In July 1853 gold was discovered at Whiskey Run beach north of the mouth of the Coquille River at a place called Randolph. To supply camp Randolph miners, the first sawmill in Coos County was built by George Wasson and his partners near Bullard’s on the lower Coquille River (now called Bullards Beach State Park). A small schooner was also built near Randolph to haul supplies between the mining camp and Empire City. This may have been the first boat building by Euro-Americans along Oregon’s south coast. By the 1890s Coquille riverboats were near their zenith. After the turn of the century, railroads and automobiles would bring an end to this colorful era.

Robby “Fosdick” Robinson, Chapter Humbug (club president), ramrodded implementation of this historical monument. After reading local author Boyd Stone’s “My Valley:History of the Coquille River Valley, Outlying Areas, and More,” Robby settled on the idea of commemorating Coquille River Boats for their impact on settling the valley.

With Chapter approval, Robby spoke to the Coquille City Council about the notion of placing the historical monument in Sturtevant Park. Instead, the city manager

suggested ECV erect their monument on the newly finished River Walk. With help from the city council, the River Walk Committee and Coquille Valley Historical Society, Robby’s third plaque eventually became history.

The usual number of Murphy’s Law situations arose during plaque planning and preparation. The first notion was to erect a concrete monument. That idea didn’t survive and was replaced with a late decision to use a rock boulder for a granite plaque. The rock was eventually provided by city employee Dennis Graham. By the time the previously announced Doin’s party and plaque dedication ceremony came around, the rock had not yet been secured to place near the boardwalk. Nonetheless, ECV members and a few civilians participated in a pre-plaque dedication. Robby, Master of Ceremonies speechified and each participant walked away with a nicely prepared keepsake discussing the history of riverboats on the Coquille River. Following the dedication, Clampers walked along the River Walk and up to the Museum for more history lessons and artifact viewing.

Clampers Clamped and camped that weekend at Sturdivant Park. Luckily we had the use of the Pavilion which provided the perfect social setting for an outing in the rain. Clampers from Washington’s Doc Maynard Chapter showed up as well as a few California Clampers to keep an eye on the Oregon boys.

A couple of weeks later the rock was finally delivered to the site when the rock was placed and the plaque secured.

All in all, the weekend was one to remember. When you’re driving thru the Coos Bay area swing by Downtown Coquille and take a stroll along their gorgeous River Walk. Right before the bridge on the north side you will find the historical monument. Considering Coquille and Coos Bay history, location and tourism opportunities, there’s a lot for a visitor to see and do. You won’t be disappointed.

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 nonprofit Del Norte County Historical Society Museum located at 577 H Street in Crescent City, California.



(Courtesy photo for the Illinois Valley News)

Humbug Robby Robinson with the finished monument Saturday, Oct. 20, 2012. If typical Clamper fashion the cameras date was not set properly.

Tips for donating to food banks

Christy Solo
IVN Contributing Writer

Between people displaced by wildfires, the holidays, the onset of winter and just life, we are entering the “Food Drive Season.”

First, every season should be food drive season. Second, this article will provide you with pro tips on the best items to donate. The tips listed aren’t, for the most part, tips you will find via a Google search on the topic. Tips found on those Google lists are helpful, but for the most part are all very similar “best practices”

type tips.

The tips in this article are real world tips, compiled from people who have worked in the food bank trenches and know what’s what.

First and foremost, before you make a donation, contact the food bank you will be donating to and verify they can take the items you plan to give. Rules of acceptance vary from food bank to food bank.

Pre-tip: Never donate food past its expiration date (or even very close to). These foods cannot be distributed, even though they are safe to eat.

Reminder: Call ahead to make sure each type of donation is accepted.

Pro-tips to consider:

- Cash is always best, though, most people prefer to donate items, so read on.
- Consider donating diapers. They are not WIC/SNAP eligible and think twice about cloth diapers because many daycares do not allow them.
- Try to think about children and the elderly. Unusual or trendy foods like quinoa might not be as welcome as something like chicken soup with stars. Parents have to

convince their children to eat whatever they receive from the pantry.

- Cake mix and frosting are greatly appreciated. Classroom birthdays are a thing in many schools, and everyone should be allowed to have a birthday cake.
- Think about the ease of eating. Dry goods can be great, but remember some people might not have electricity. Consider granola bars, fruit cups, and other things that can be eaten with no preparation.
- Spices and basic sauces are a good donation choice (nothing too exotic). Most pantries are pretty well stocked with pasta and rice, so donations of things to flavor those are appreciated. Separate sauces and spices are good for families too, as plain pasta can be prepared for children, and spices can be added for adult palates.
- Feminine hygiene products, because these are not WIC/SNAP eligible.
- Donate something “special”

like chocolate or a really nice box of cookies. Think of all the reasons you “treat yourself” to a little luxury, everything from a breakup to a celebration, and remember everyone feels those things.

- Low sodium and/ or low sugar versions of staples like peanut butter, tuna and juice.
- Instant coffee or tea. Senior citizens especially appreciate decaf instant coffee, as it can help them socialize (e.g. the ability to invite a friend over for coffee).
- Pet food and cat litter; make sure you check the food bank you’re giving to accepts pet food, or it can imply (accidentally) that you didn’t care enough to give “people” food. Pet food is a great donation as pets are a deep source of comfort and people will often chose to feed pets before themselves and/or share their food bank food with pets.
- Kosher, gluten free, vegan and/or nut free foods are often highly sought after.
- Reusable tote

bags, cooking oil, soap, cleaning supplies and personal hygiene items.

- Also, children’s vitamins, Tylenol, Advil, aspirin, cold and flu medication and allergy medication. Remember that these medications usually cost quite a few dollars and people have to live without them, because they can’t afford them. Think of “basic” items most of us take for granted; sunscreen, bug spray, band aids, phone calling cards, hand warmers, lip balm, etc.

Final pro-tip: Don’t donate the stuff in your pantry you won’t eat or don’t know what to do with. We all have those cans of chick-peas, or canned oysters Uncle Fred gave us; don’t donate them.

Food Banks In the I.V: Doug Hoskins Resource Center at 481 S. Junction Ave. Mondays 2-4 p.m., and Selma Center (temporary), 18255 Redwood Hwy. Thursday, 1 - 2:30 p.m. You can also try donating to I.V. Family Coalition or I.V. High School.

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