

Through New Eyes
by Bill Wickland

A RICHNESS OF RIVERS

Maybe I don't know the difference between a creek and a river. Maybe the folks who named things around Reedsport didn't want everybody else to get jealous over us having three rivers come together within three miles of the ocean. I can hear them now: "Hey -- we already have the Smith River joining the Umpqua River here; let's call the Scholfield a creek." Or maybe the Scholfields called it a creek.

Seems like folks here didn't make a big thing out of the creek. In the early 'eighties, a "luxury" 128-site mobile home park was laid out in a bend in the creek right near where I live now. They call it "River Bend," and where the sign mentions Scholfield Creek, they didn't spell it right, leaving out the first 'l,' and have never corrected it. There is a short Reedsport street wrongly spelled "Schofield," and a state highway sign on the bridge over the creek right in town spells it that way, also. But a few miles east on Hwy 38 is a white-on-green state sign announcing the Scholfield dumping area with two 'l's, the way it is spelled on maps. Recently, one of the two local weeklies here spelled it both ways in the same issue. Go figure.

Ten minutes at the library turns up the historical information that the creek was named after Nathan Scholfield's son Socrates. They were both here on an expedition in 1850, and both spelled their name as above.

I really don't like misspelled signs, particularly neon ones like you see on 82nd Avenue in Portland. It means that somebody figured they could get away without paying a real wordsmith, and in this case it is state and city government, as well as land developers.

In this residence park on the creek there are some homes which look as old as they actually are, but most are nicely kept, and a brand new manufactured is just settling on its foundation.

Snooping around there on a morning walk, fascinated, I didn't locate an advertised nine hole, three par golf course -- but in what the site map called "playing fields" there are five poles with little flags. No greens, no holes. It might be fun to chip up near those poles on a lazy Saturday. More likely, golf just doesn't matter in the midst of such beauty.

Of course, not all of the sites are right on the Scholfield, but those that aren't creekside are a two-minute walk from the banks. And the docks. A lot of docks. Very few boats tied to them. Weeds grow on some of the docks. Maybe some folks are too old now, and others too busy, to do much boating. There are a lot of RV garages, and a lot of RVs parked on the edge of the "golf course."

My map shows Scholfield to be about eight miles long, and this big bend in it seems to be about two miles short of where it empties into the Umpqua. I walked across the creek on a railroad trestle and was soon out of sight of anything but the creek in a huge marsh in the foothills of the Coast Range. There is no road there. A few houses are visible in the hills.

After I was quiet for a while, a few geese circled, their honks echoing off the water between the hills, then alit almost right in front of me.

This is a 20-minute walk from where I live.

If I lived in River Bend on Scholfield Creek, I might let the golf course lie natural also, but I think I'd have a quiet little boat, (named Socrates) and go out and sit in the marsh and read a book and watch birds until I dozed off.

Ding ding! News flash! In what is now mid-summer, I've just acquired a little rubber dingy. The tide strongly affects Scholfield Creek, so I can put in about two hours short of high tide, and drift upstream. Then the tide will turn, and the creek will deliver me back to where I can paddle ashore. I can name the dingy Socrates and go driftin' for a spell. I think I just slipped into paradise.

Bill Wickland is a life-long wordo and occasional journalist, now semi-retired in Reedsport.

Llama Spit
By AJ Coyne

Find your bliss... the smile of a friend, the wind through the trees, the flickering of candlelight, the roar of the ocean, a good book, the smell of a baby, a soft kiss, a beautiful song, dancing alone, rain on your face, the perfect word, the color yellow, a finished crossword puzzle, children laughing, an empty street, the pouring rain, the finest mist, family, dusk, a seven letter scrabble word, a head-butt from your favorite pet, a lazy boat ride on a Tuesday afternoon...

I started this sentence years ago and have been adding to it ever since. It is a reminder for me to slow down and appreciate the moments in my life where perfection lives. You can't imagine how many times I have been told I have a tendency to spoil these moments by talking about them while they are happening, but my feeling is that the more they are mentioned, the greater amount of joy I can spread. I know I sound like a hippy, sometimes I can't even believe the words that come out of my mouth, I just keep throwing up my Aquarian ideas on people with the hope that some of it will eventually stick. I enjoy sharing my bliss no matter what the reaction, and I know that saying things out loud is the only way to get them to spread and to make a difference. Did I just say make a difference? I am starting to become a bit preachy, but keep reading -- you will either learn something or be completely annoyed. Either way I am happy.

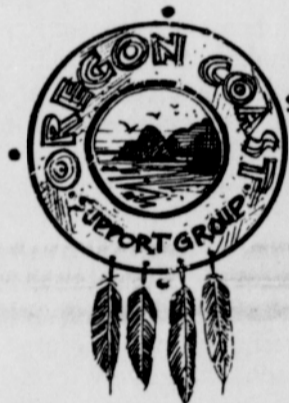
If there is any time to start spreading our happiness this is it; the masses are rolling in and there will be many locals at their wits' end if they aren't already. It is becoming harder and harder to stop and remember what is important. The amazing thing is that when you voice your moments with others, not only do you get the relive them but usually the other person will have a moment they will share with you, and then the cycle starts. Here is a moment from my life this week -- read it, remember one of your own, grab your nearest friend and share it with them; you will be surprised by what you receive in return.

My baby brother brought his new girlfriend to town this weekend to meet me for the first time. It was so wonderful to see him happy and especially for him to want to share it with me. We had a great time all weekend, but on Saturday night the sight we happened to see blew us away. Imagine sitting by a roaring fire, surrounded by friends, family and of course dogs, under a moon so bright it could have been the sun. There was a fine mist along the water's edge that made me feel like I was in a dream. As the moon began to set we watched it start to eclipse. I have never experienced a lunar eclipse before and I can only tell you that it is almost indescribable, and for a writer this hard to admit. Just imagine watching all phases of the moon, but instead of in a month, it is in an hour; and as the last little sliver of the moon lowered into the horizon the sun was rising over our shoulders. The end result was the mist along the water turning the most magical color; it was shining the palest blue underneath from the moon and the lightest blush on top from the sun. It was one of the few times I have been so awed I could not speak.

Every single day holds some moment like the one I had on Saturday, maybe not to that extent, but joy is out there to be had. Recognize yours and spread them around. Bliss can be eternal if you pay attention.

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