Illegal sewage dumpings baffle state, county

by MICHAEL P. JONES
Post Correspondent

The Mt. Hood area has been called many things by many people. Some call it "God's Country," or "Oregon's Last Eden." The development-minded claim that it has the potential of becoming one of the world's best ski resorts because of its year-around skiing.

However, the way things have gone these past few weeks, the Mt. Hood area could become known as "The Sewage Capital of Oregon." Government organizations have been trying to cope with a growing number of illegal sewage dumpings, both in the rivers and directly on the roads.

The last officially-reported dump was discovered Nov. 12 at the junction of Fairway and Bright Avenues, which run through an undeveloped section of the Rippling River Resort near the new Hoodland Sewage Treatment Plant.

Larry Hoyt, who lives just around the corner from the dump site on Arrah Wanna Boulevard, drove up a hill on Fairway Avenue and his car was immersed in sewage. It was six inches deep and covered half the road. The sewage flowed down into a storm sewer, which empties into the Salmon River.

Hoyt is believed to have discovered the second "known" spill that occurred that day. His wife, Louise, had smelled sewage at noon.

On Friday, Nov. 13, the Hoyts contacted the Hoodland Rural Fire District and reported the dump. Assistant Fire Chief Lane Wintermute was dispatched to the scene but, due to the heavy rains, found no trace of the dump. It had washed down into the river.

On Nov. 15, three more inches of sewer sludge was discovered at this same location, making this the third "known" dump in four days. By the time investigator Dick Wixon of the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality visited the site, more sewage had accumulated on the road.

Wixon then notified Walter Cate of Clackamas County's Code Compliance Section of the Department of Environmental Services, and requested that a cleaning truck be dispatched to wash the streets off. The following day a road foreman visited the site and reported that there wasn't enough sewage left, due to the heavy rains, to have a truck drive up the mountain to hose off the site. However, within a couple of days, another dump was made.

Hugh Kloney, who is in charge of the county's Road Department, was mad.

"If I could get my hands around his neck (the dumper's)," said Kloney, "I'd stick his nose in it.

"We would have sent a flush truck all the way from Oregon City but it was raining so hard we thought it'd all be washed away," said Kloney. "However, we figured wrong. Somebody dumped some more sewage at the same spot."

Kloney said that he has never seen the situation with illegal dumping "as bad in the Mt. Hood area as compared with anywhere else in the entire county."

"It's (the Mt. Hood area) not like other areas in the county, where they at least dump it alongside the road," said Kloney. "Up there, they dump it right in the middle of the road."

Cate and Wixon said that it is impossible for their agencies to do anything about "these dumps" because they have no idea where the sewage is coming from or who is responsible.

"We don't have the foggiest idea," said Cate. "We don't in any of these situations."

Kloney said that he personally could not understand "why the people in the area haven't seen anyone dump the sewage." This, he said, makes him suspect that it isn't the work of a "midnight dumper," someone who dumps at night to prevent being seen. He believes the spills are occurring any time of the day or night.

"Why get up in the middle of the night," asked Kloney, "when it's more convenient to dump during working hours. That's straight time. If nobody reports you, why worry? It costs money to dump into a sewage treatment plant, and this way someone's saving money."

Jay Massey, a fish biologist with the Oregon State Department of Fish and Wildlife, said that he has had a number of calls from fishermen in the area who are quite concerned about the dumps because the sewage is entering the Salmon River. He said that the dumpings are of considerable interest to his department since the river is a major salmon and steelhead stream in the Mt. Hood area.

So far county and state agencies are at a loss as to what to do about the situation. With budget cuts, hiring special personnel to work on the problem is out of the question. But what they all agree on, is that things won't get better until the person(s) responsible for the illegal sewage dumpings are apprehended.

Blazers' Washington helps with 'Mail Off' campaign

by GWEN BOGH
Post Correspondent

Kermit Washington of the Portland Trail Blazers helped the Boring Post Office get its "Mail Off" campaign underway by sending some early Christmas gifts himself.

During the Christmas season post offices are burdened by large volumes of mail. To help minimize the problem Dwight Stampflee, postmaster of the Boring Post Office, arranged to have Washington at the post office Friday to help draw attention to the mail early campaign.

Washington mailed basketballs to the grandchildren of Jean Rolli, who is a clerk at the post office. Michael and Brent Jackson received the balls bearing Washington's signature.

Stampflee said, "It isn't too early to be mailing for Christmas." Waiting until the last minute necessitates sending cards or packages by airmail instead of 4th class, which is considerably more expensive.

He noted that mail bound for Alaska must be at the post office by Dec. 6 if it is to arrive on time.

The post office, located amidst fir trees and serene landscaping, was built in 1976. According to Ben Luscher, Portland Regional postmaster, the Boring Post Office is "one of the brightest spots" among 150 post offices in southern Washington and Oregon. He said that Standflee has done an "exceptional job," at the post office and that both the interior and exterior grounds reflect that excellence.

Also appearing at the "Mail Off" was Ben Suscher, Portland postmaster, and Norm Singleton, Gresham postmaster.

Kermit Washington and Jean Rolli — Photo by Gwen Bogh

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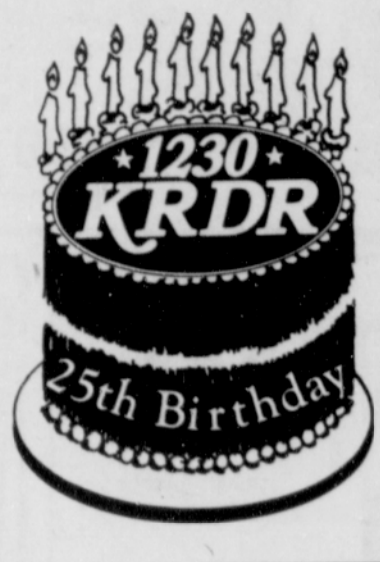

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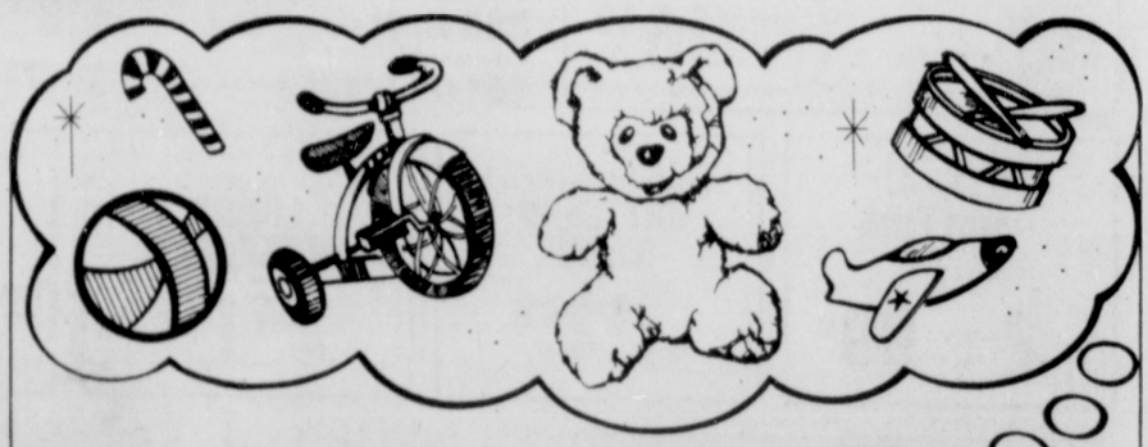

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