



Ryan Brennecke/The Bulletin

Evron Jones-Sprouse sits with her dog Aurora Grace on the front porch of her home in Madras.

Poodle puppy falls down elevator shaft, lives to bark another day

BY JOE SIESS
CO Media Group

It was an August day like any other day, and two of 84-year-old Evron Jones-Sprouse's poodles, a female named Blackberry and her 8-month-old puppy, Aurora Grace, took off running at full tilt, as dogs are wont to do.

Jones-Sprouse, of Madras, has been breeding poodles for 50 years, and she is used to her dogs bolting off after cats or to do any number of dog related activities. But this time was different. As the sun began to set, Jones-Sprouse called and called for her two poodles but Blackberry and Aurora Grace never came home.

So, Jones-Sprouse and her husband got in the car and looked for the two dogs all over town and out into the fields. But there was no sign of them.

As it turned out, Aurora Grace fell down an elevator shaft at an under construction hotel next to the Inn at Cross Keys Station down the road from Jones-Sprouse's home.

It was Aurora Grace's mother who initially came back home hours later to alert Jones-Sprouse about the puppy's situation, Jones-Sprouse said.

"You could see with the agitation the mother had, 'help! Help!' and we had no idea," Jones-Sprouse said as she stroked and gently shushed the young poodle sitting on her lap. "Blackberry apparently saw her



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daughter fall through the hole, was panic stricken. Rushed home to see if we could help."

"I was afraid a raptor might have gotten her, because she would never have left her mother, and her mother would never have left her," she said.

It wasn't until first thing in the morning the next day that Jones-Sprouse learned Aurora Grace had fallen into the hole. Somebody heard her barking, called the police and the police removed the poodle from the elevator shaft and brought her to the humane society. When Jones-Sprouse called, they confirmed the poodle was safe and she went to pick her up.

"By God's grace, which is why she is Aurora Grace, she did not get hurt, no broken legs, back, head, nothing. I think she had a little sprain on the front paw.

She was pretty scared, and I imagine she was in the shaft all night," Jones-Sprouse said. "It was pitch dark, so I think she was probably there all night. Come morning, somebody heard her barking, and called the police and they got her out. I don't know how they got her out and I don't know how deep the shaft was."

Now that Aurora Grace is safe, Jones-Sprouse hopes the construction site will take care of the open elevator shaft. She said she has since learned that the only thing covering the elevator shaft is a bar across the opening.

"A bar across it is not going to keep an animal or a child, or maybe an inebriated adult at night, from falling in," Jones-Sprouse said. "The shaft should definitely be totally covered. I

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— Evron Jones-Sprouse

mean if you have a hole in the ground, a well or anything, you put a cover over it. Anybody could fall in in the middle of the night. Or another animal or a deer or heaven knows what."

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OREGON

Water violations continue climbing

BY MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
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The number of water law violations in Oregon has continued climbing in 2022, building on a trend that state regulators have observed over the past five years.

So far this year, state water regulators have issued 50 notices of violation for unlawful irrigation and other problems, up from 40 in all of 2021 and five times as many as in 2018.

"They have increased dramatically in recent years, largely due to illegal cannabis," said Ivan Gall, field services division administrator for the Oregon Water Resources Department.

Black market marijuana producers have been known to steal water, but OWRD has also encountered regulated cannabis growers who've run afoul of water law — for example, by using domestic water sources for commercial production.

Concerns about adverse impacts from marijuana and hemp production in Oregon have prompted legal reforms and increased funding for cannabis regulation, such as the \$5 million approved specifically for OWRD's water rights enforcement last year.

Employees from OWRD have been working in conjunction with law enforcement officers who destroy illegal marijuana plants and associated irrigation equipment during raids, Gall said during a Sept. 1 meeting of the state's water resources commission.

"That is by far the most effective way to get compliance with water law," he said.

The water rights enforcement money was approved last year as part of an "unprecedented" investment in water resources, including funding for irrigation projects, drought

assistance and basin studies, according to the agency.

Since last summer, OWRD has hired 27 new field services employees, including seven dedicated enforcement employees focused on cannabis, which has increased the division's staff size by nearly 50%.

"We're looking forward to some exciting times," Gall said. "It's really exciting to be filling these positions."

Watermasters and other field services employees responded to 1,120 complaints and initiated 732 investigations last year, in addition to conducting more than 23,000 checks to ensure compliance with water rights rules.

The field services division also inspected more than 1,550 wells in 2021, finding construction deficiencies in about 15% of the newly-constructed ones, and about 160 of the 950 dams that come under state's regulatory jurisdiction.

The expanded field services workforce will provide more "boots on the ground" and improve data collection at a time when water supplies are increasingly lacking, Gall said.

For example, in the past couple years, the state has experienced a serious problem with domestic wells going dry due to depleted groundwater levels.

"It doesn't look like it's going to get resolved in the short term, so I think that's going to be an ongoing workload the agency will need to deal with," he said.

Illegal water diversions by illicit marijuana producers have been relatively minor on an individual basis, but that doesn't mean the issue is inconsequential, Gall said.

"Although small, in total they can certainly add up to problems, especially in times of scarcity," he said.

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Trails

Continued from A8

The trail starts from Dutchman with a tough climb — from 6,350 feet in elevation to nearly 7,000 feet. It was a steep climb through the high-alpine forest. After a few miles, the trail flattened out and I came to the junction with Metolius-Windigo. A right turn would keep me on Flagline and lead me down a fast downhill section toward the Swampy Lakes area and eventually back to Bend.

But I made a left turn onto Metolius-Windigo, one of the highest-elevation bike trails in Central Oregon, not counting those at the Mt. Bachelor Bike Park.

After a steep downhill with some tight turns, I came to a viewpoint of South Sister and Broken Top, just a few miles away. The trail continued with some long uphill sections but remained relatively flat and rideable. Late August usually makes for a somewhat sandy track along Central Oregon trails, but because Flagline and Metolius-Windigo are located at such a high elevation, they tend to remain less sandy than trails closer to Bend.

Come fall, after some rain and freezing temperatures and before snow accumulation, Flagline and Metolius-Windigo will be at their best for mountain bikers.

Eventually I came into an open area with a dramatic view of Broken Top. The trail then led me to a creek crossing, which was just shallow enough for me to ride my bike through.

Much of the Metolius-Windigo Trail parallels Forest Road 370, which leads to the Broken Top Trailhead and the popular hike to No Name Lake in the Three Sisters Wilderness. Bikes are not allowed in wilderness areas, but it is possible to ride your bike to the trailhead then make the hike to the lake. (Reminder that a Central Cascades Wilderness permit is required for the Broken Top Trailhead).

But I remained on the Metolius-Windigo singletrack and decided to turn around after six miles.

I soaked in more of the mountain scenery of Broken Top and South Sister, then turned back onto Flagline for the fast and precipitous drop back down to Dutchman Flat.

All told, I rode about 12 miles and climbed about 800 feet in just over two hours. No, it was not the classic Central Oregon loop ride, but it provided a refreshing escape into the high country without taking up an entire day.

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