

SPOKESMAN Opinion

OUR VIEW

Saving one of Central Oregon's fine jewels

The Deschutes River is one of the greatest free shows in Central Oregon. The thing is alive with movement, light, people and creatures.

It's also in trouble.

There's more water allocated in the Deschutes Basin than there is water.

Unlined, open canals can lose half the water diverted into them from the Deschutes River.

The surge in flows in the summer to support irrigation and the dramatic dropoff in winter produce a river system that can be devastating to the creatures that try to make the river area home.

But there is progress in turning a 100-year-old canal system designed to make things grow in a desert into a system that works for people, farmland and wildlife.

Central Oregon Irrigation District completed a 7.9-mile canal piping project this year from Redmond to Smith Rock.

It will mean more water diverted from the river gets where it is intended to go. It will mean improved river flows in the Upper Deschutes where wild fluctuations in river flows is one of the reasons the Oregon Spotted Frog is a threatened species.

The 21 cubic feet per second conserved by piping will aid North Unit Irrigation District farmers, who are located around Madras. And in turn, an additional 21 cubic feet per second will be available to be released from North Unit's Wickiup Reservoir into the Upper Deschutes upriver from Bend to help restore that critical habitat.

It's not enough. It is progress.

The goal under the Habitat Conservation Plan that the basin's irrigation districts and more signed on to is for 300 cubic feet per second by 2028 with minimum flows of 100 cubic feet per second. Another 21 is progress toward the goal.

We hope not, but the basin may experience more years of drought. That means meeting that 300 cubic feet per second goal doesn't get easier.

Piping projects need to continue. More irrigation improvement projects are needed. And we hope ideas like the water banking pilot program between Central Oregon Irrigation District and North Unit will thrive. It helps move more water from where it is not needed to where it is.

Piping is tremendously expensive. The COID project came in with a total price of about \$30 million. Most of it was federal dollars. Some of it was state money. But the river benefits, the creatures benefit and we benefit when we ensure every drop counts.

Editorials reflect the views of the Spokesman's editorial board, Publisher Heidi Wright and Editor Tim Trainor.

WRITE TO US

Letters policy: We welcome your letters. Letters should be limited to one issue, contain no more than 300 words and include the writer's phone number and address for verification. We edit letters for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons. We reject poetry, personal attacks, form letters, letters submitted elsewhere and those appropriate for other sections of the Spokesman.

Guest columns: Your submissions should be between 600 and 800 words and must include the writer's phone number and address for verification. We edit submissions for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons. We reject those submitted elsewhere.

How to submit:

- Email is preferred: news@redmondspokesman.com
- Or mail to: 361 SW Sixth Street, Redmond OR 97756



YOUR VIEWS

Lessons learned serving in Alaska during Vietnam War

BY CARL VETREES

“Good morning, Vietnam!” Those are the words made famous in 1987 by Robin Williams portraying Adrian Cronauer as an Army disc jockey for Armed Forces Radio in the motion picture by that name.

As we observe Veterans Day in the United States, I recall my role in the Armed Forces Radio at Elmendorf Air Force Base in Anchorage, Alaska, and the dissimilarities with Specialist Cronauer.



Vetrees

I don't come from a family with a long history of military service, although two uncles served during World War II. As I graduated from journalism school at the University of Washington in 1963, the scope of the conflict in Vietnam was getting more severe.

Many of my fellow students and fraternity brothers were wary of what the immediate future might hold. We had all registered for the draft at age 18.

I proceeded to my first post-college job at the daily newspaper in Sitka, Alaska, and married nine months later. By the winter of 1966, however, at age 25 I received the letter I had dreaded informing me to report for duty.

Ginger and I put a lot of thought into that notice. Had I accepted the draft notice I assuredly would have ended up in combat in the rice paddies of Vietnam. I could have declared myself a conscientious objector, because I couldn't imagine my actually killing someone, even if he were deemed an enemy of our county. I wasn't about to abandon my country and move to Canada as some draft avoiders were doing.

I pondered joining the Alaska National Guard, but that route was not well defined. In a decision not hastily made, I enlisted in the U.S. Navy. I believed that branch of the service was more likely to make use of my education and put me in a support role rather than combat. I applied for Officer Candidate School and flew to Anchorage and Kodiak to begin my enrollment.

While awaiting word on the OCS application, we prepared to relocate Ginger to her parents' home in Seattle while I was in boot camp or officer training. Thinking we might never make it back to Alaska, we planned and executed a ferry trip to Skagway, and a road trip to Fairbanks. We took an overnight excursion to Nome and Kotzebue before driving back to the Lower 48 on the mostly gravel Al-Can Highway in an inadequately small British sedan not unlike a Volkswagen Beetle.

After 10 weeks of basic training in San Diego, I learned I was being assigned to the Alaskan Forces Radio Network in Anchorage. I reclaimed my bride in Seattle, where we bought a Volkswagen Microbus in which to haul our worldly possessions, drove to Prince Rupert, British Columbia, ferried to Haines, and arrived in Anchorage on Election Day 1966 with a light snow falling.

Serving on an Air Force base, I was an orphan. Of approximately 30 men assigned to the radio network, most were Air Force; a smaller group was Army, and one career sailor and I made up the Navy force. I worked a five-day week from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. There were no additional responsibilities such as night watch.

The navy protocol instilled in bootcamp went unused. I learned about the differences between print and broadcast media and overcame the pronunciation that I

didn't have the voice to be on the radio. I learned the nuances of tape recorders and produced hourly newscasts.

I became involved in informing and educating the troops stationed throughout the vast state, many in very remote villages staffing DEW-line facilities. For most of the remote installations the AFRN transmitter was their only broadcast link, although some of the larger installations had their own closed-circuit television broadcasts with kinescopes mailed to their facilities.

I talked regularly on the telephone with officers and enlisted men about what was going on at their far-flung installations or communities as they coped with a year's obligation in the frozen north. I covered a summer flood in Fairbanks, the dedication of a Naval Arctic Research Station in Point Barrow and aspects of recovery from the 1964 earthquake. That warranted an hour-long documentary.

I flew to Northeast Cape Air Force Station on St. Lawrence Island in the Bering Sea, closer to Siberia than Sarah Palin has ever been.

We interviewed military and other dignitaries refueling at Elmendorf on the polar route to Vietnam. Names of George Romney and Spiro Agnew come to mind. And comedian Patrick Paulson made Anchorage a stop during his presidential bid in 1968.

In 33 months at AFRN I learned a lot, how to ask more penetrating questions, and to respect the hardships and inconveniences that my fellow servicemen — and many fewer servicewomen — endured. And I realized I was more cutout for print rather than broadcast journalism.

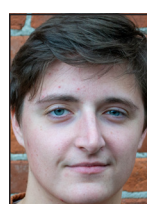
Life goes on.

■ Carl Vetrees is a former editor of the Redmond Spokesman and a longtime Redmond resident.

OUR VIEW

Newest addition to the Spokesman

My name is Harrison McKinney, the newest addition here at The Redmond Spokesman. I was hired on the pretense of being a jack-of-all-trades to handle advertising, classifieds, obituaries, circulation and some writing for the paper.



McKinney

In 2020, I graduated from OSU Cascades with a Bachelor of Arts in social science and English. That was in the heat of the pandemic, so my graduation ceremony consisted of a box in the mail with some confetti. Off to a great start. I wouldn't call my short attempt at freelance writing a catastrophic failure, but it was

equally as lackluster.

That led me into a different kind of freelancing. Before this job, I worked as a contractor installing ceramic tile, so I went from mixing cement with icy water in skeletal houses on dark, excruciating mornings to a cozy office job selling newspapers ten minutes from my house. Don't worry, I've adjusted.

Redmond has been my home since 2008 when my family moved from Portland to be closer to our family's cattle ranch, the M Bar L Ranch, in Culver.

Working at the ranch is one of my favorite memories. I remember bobbing up and down in the torn leather seat with the radio blasting in my grandparents' John Deere, dutifully rolling the bailer over the plush rows of alfalfa. Of course, that

was during summer and fall. Winter consisted of mostly standing on a hay wagon, trying to grin through the pelting sleet, rain and snow while doling out slices of hay to the foggy, mooing mouths. To this day, the smell of cow excrement brings me much comfort.

My passions are reading, writing, going on long walks and true crime. That's made my job compiling the police log one of the highlights of my week.

I also love cats, especially my cat, Ramsey. Ramsey is a small, fat, black cat with an even fatter attitude. As a kitten, she successfully charged a full-grown Rottweiler who yielded immediately at the frightening little puff. Animals and nature are also a prominent fixture in my life. You can usually find me outside enjoying the rain

and making a few feral friends along the way. And of course another prominent fixture is my girlfriend, Emily, an astute astrologer and budding botanist with a flame point siamese cat.

Since being hired at the Spokesman, I've found working at a newspaper to be exhilarating. I never know what I'm going to do or what interesting people I'll get to meet each day.

Redmond is a part of who I am, which gives me a lot of pride to be able to work for our newspaper. What's most important to me is expanding the Spokesman whether it be through selling more advertisements, going door-to-door or whatever else is necessary.

Swing by the office or get in touch with me at 541-923-1370 or hmckinney@redmond-spokesman.com