

# Of smelt and roses

Smelt in the Sandy River. First time in years, Paul is excited. All he needs is a buddy willing to join in on the excitement. Ron would be perfect. His expertise in fishing amounts to which package to extract from the freezer at Costco.



## On the Wild Side

by G.I. Wilson

Paul manages to squeeze the car into the last parking spot along the river.

Ron is in awe at the size of the mob along the river bank. Assorted bodies are waving what looks like butterfly nets—on steroids—in the air and in the water. The river is lined with people in chest waders and hip boots. Some are wading the snow-fed, icy waters with no protection at all. Paul calls it “Smelt Fever.”

The goal is to make a long sweep downstream, with the current, hoping to intercept smelt on their way upstream to spawn. Some folks are so close together looks like dueling sabers, or nets, as it were.

Successful dip, two or three smelt in the net, person returns to land and dumps them into the obligatory 5-gallon bucket, only to turn back and find at least 13 nets have staked claim to his spot.

Could have been in the San Francisco airport from the cacophony of languages reverberating across the water—Russian, Scandinavian, Spanish, several Asian dialects and a smattering of English.

She catches Ron’s attention first, as she comes out of the water, net and smelt over her shoulder. Attractive, make-up, hair perfect, short shorts, strides like a model on the carpet. But the legs stand out like neon lights in the fog. They are somewhere between scarlet and fluorescent purple. Has goose bumps like purple M&Ms. Can only guess how long she had been in the water.

She is all smiles for her guy, right out of *Duck Dynasty*, decked out in insulated camo and a stack of empties at his side. Guess he is guarding the 5-gallon bucket.

Ron becomes captivated by “the family” settled in on a sandy nook. Dad, skinny as the

wooden net handle he’s wielding, bib overalls, barefoot, standing in water up to his arm pits.

Dad’s net is home made. Not one of those fancy aluminum jobs. Looks like an old pitch fork handle with an onion sack and wire hoop held together with haywire and duct tape.

Mom is the “stout” one. Ready to cook smelt. Hair done up in rollers, “seasoned” apron, long-handled fork. Has a hot bed of coals going, cast iron skillet—big enough to feed a platoon of hungry Marines. She has the skillet ready with sizzling hot lard.

Her four little rug rats are having a ball. Look like losers in a mud wrestling match. Sand and mud from head to toe. Little hands look like a mudder’s gloves.

Dad comes sloshing out of the river, water gushing out of his bibs, seven or eight smelt in the net. Kids come running with squeals of delight. He

# Volcanoes’ new coach preps for old team’s leading role

By HERB SWETT  
For the Keizertimes

“I learned about a lot of things.”

So said Kyle Haines, new manager of the Salem-Keizer Volcanoes, when asked about his preparations for his new job.

Haines, 32, played shortstop for the Volcanoes in 2004 and had his first managing job last year in the Frontier League, an independent league. His club, the Frontier Grays, was based in Highland, Illinois, a St. Louis suburb about 100 miles west of his home in Louisville, Illinois.

The Grays did not have a winning record and had to

play all their games on the road, because there was no stadium in Highland. However, Haines and the San Francisco Giants organization thought what he learned was good preparation for managing the Volcanoes.

Haines played high school baseball in Louisville and played for Eastern Illinois University before being drafted by the Giants in 2004. After several years in the Giants organization, he became a free agent and played briefly in the Cleveland Indians organiza-

tion before finding his first managerial opportunity.

He expects to have the same coaches the Volcanoes had last year, Ricky Ward for batting and Matt Yourkin for pitching.

As usual, the player roster will not be known until a few days before opening day, which will be at home June 17 against a college all-star team. A four-day home series against the Vancouver Canadians will follow, and then the Volcanoes will play the Hops in Hillsboro for three days.



Kyle Haines

turns the net upside down and dumps smelt, river water and an assortment of leaves, fir needles and debris directly into the smoking grease. Beads of water pop into the air like popcorn. Several smelt react to the hot grease and go airborne, landing in a mixture of sand, charcoal, and unidentified materials.

Eager little muddy hands to the rescue. After several tries, the little squirming critters are tossed back into the skillet, along with sand and assorted objects.

When a morsel is golden brown, Mom skewers it with the trusty fork and deposits it in dirty little waiting hands. Too hot for the mouth, the kid does a smelt version of the old hot potato, hot potato game, until the little critter becomes mouth-worthy.

Captivated by all this excitement, Ron forgets about Paul and his quest for smelt. Paul is a big guy, long legs, chest waders and an extra long handled net. He wades out beyond most of the shorter dippers. He has his eye on a virtual cloud of smelt headed upriver.

In one powerful swoop he fills the net to the point where the handle is bending precariously. Ron dashes to the water’s edge with the trusty 5-gallon bucket. Two monster swoops and the bucket is full of flopping little shiny critters. Hi-fives and atta-boys are in order.

Back home, the two celebrate with an adult beverage and pat themselves on the back.

The kids are fascinated with the catch. Soon the particular odor of a bucket full of smelt begins to permeate the kitchen. “Time to clean these little devils,” Ron questions.

“Oh my God, what have we done?” Paul moans, staring at the bucket. “Someone told me you just fry ‘em up and eat guts, feathers and all.”

“You want to eat your half that way, go for it. Not me,” Ron adds. “My parents always opened ‘em up and cleaned ‘em out.”

“Oh my god, what have we done?” Paul moans again.

After cleaning a couple dozen, they look at the bucket, still full of smelt, with disgust.

“Got an idea,” Paul blurts. “Maybe we can give some away. I know Mobergs like fish.”

“Hey John, want some nice fresh smelt? John, hello John.” Paul, incredulous, “Can’t believe it. He hung up on me.”

Summer arrives and Ron drops by frequently to visit. He enjoys strolling through Paul’s rose garden.

“I don’t believe your roses have ever been so big and beautiful,” he pauses, nose testing the breeze, “Is it just me, or is there a different, distinct aroma this year?”

Want to experience dipping smelt? Season opens two half days (6 a.m. to noon) on the Sandy River, Saturday, March 7 and Sunday, March 15. Limit is 10 pounds per person and no license required.

# Support, donations sought for Clear Lake new track fundraiser

Clear Lake Elementary School’s Parent-Teacher Association is holding a fundraising auction and dinner Saturday, March 14.

Organizers are currently looking for donations for the auction planned for the event. Proceeds are used for academic enrichment programs, new technology, field trips, playground equipment and the planned addition of a new track at the school. This year’s goal is \$20,000.

The dinner and auction begins at 5:30 p.m. Cost is \$20 per person or \$120 for a table of eight. Child care is available for \$5.

For more information, contact Shawna Toavs at rstoavs@comcast.net, or April McVay at mcvaythree@gmail.com.

# Monarch ballers host try-outs

The Mid-Valley Monarchs basketball program will once again be holding try-outs and sign-ups for spring and summer teams.

The program is designed to help players who wish to pursue more advanced basketball during their off season. It does not conflict with school programs and is intended to support their school teams. The program will set up as many teams as the numbers of players and qualified available coaches provides.

Try-outs/Sign-ups are:  
High School Girls (currently in grades 8 - 11)  
Sunday, March 1: 4:30 - 7:30 p.m.  
Sunday, March 15: 4:30 - 7:30 p.m.  
Tuesday, March 17: 7 - 9 p.m.  
Middle School Girls (currently in grades 6 - 7)  
Sunday, March 1: 2 - 4 p.m.  
Sunday, March 15: 2 - 4 p.m.  
Tuesday, March 17: 5:30 - 7 p.m.

The tryouts on March 1 and 15 will be held at West Salem HS. The location for March 17 is to be determined and will be announced at [www.midvalleymonarchs.com](http://www.midvalleymonarchs.com)

There will be a \$25 try-out fee that will cover both sessions (the fee is then applied to the player’s season participation cost). Players are not required to attend all tryout sessions, but are encouraged to attend as many as possible. Each of the teams will have a fee to participate that will be based on the number of tournaments in which they enter. Games and practices will begin in late March and early April.

For more information, visit [www.midvalleymonarchs.com](http://www.midvalleymonarchs.com) or contact Ron Hittner, (503) 580-5722, [ronhittner@hotmail.com](mailto:ronhittner@hotmail.com) or Terry Williams, (503) 871-6551, [twilliams@corban.edu](mailto:twilliams@corban.edu) if you have questions.

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**FDIC**

## crossword

### Batter Up

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CREATORS NEWS SERVICE By Charles Preston

**ACROSS**

1 DC arm-twisters  
5 Off kilter  
9 Limited  
14 Wellington’s alma mater  
15 Flushing place  
16 Pressed  
17 Lake or Perry  
18 Break away  
19 Bumps into  
20 Changed situation  
23 Computer-user’s hookup  
24 Fix chuckholes  
28 Ho’s follower  
29 Pokey  
31 Jones preceder  
32 Former secretary of state  
34 Lotion potion  
35 Body of laws  
36 Pretty close  
39 Outer limit  
40 Durham university  
41 Peak in Sicily  
42 Light-horse Harry  
43 Snack  
44 Exist  
45 Fancy fabric

47 Tack item  
51 Cooperate  
54 Biblical musician  
57 \_\_\_ da capo  
58 Cinema pooch  
59 Settled, slangily?  
60 Louis XV wore them  
61 Geetars’ kin  
62 Schoolbooks  
63 Cool  
64 Hermes’ invention

**DOWN**

1 Tallest of the hickories  
2 Pay for  
3 It reaches aphelion  
4 Squeaky clean  
5 Buzzing  
6 Sea creature  
7 Bona fide  
8 Yin’s counterpart  
9 Type of squash  
10 Pile  
11 Get up there  
12 Gain  
13 RE’s quest  
21 Swing holder  
22 The little mermaid  
25 Decorate  
26 One of the Collinses

27 Merino mom  
29 Assuage  
30 Enamelware  
32 Pitcher Nomo  
33 Inflamm  
34 End at  
35 Screech  
37 Minneapolis suburb  
38 Reason for a red flag  
39 Tree  
43 Ball girls?  
44 It’s about time!  
46 Solar-year excess  
47 Steppe antelope  
48 Like thin ice  
49 Out-and-out  
50 Terrible twos, e.g.  
52 Hang open  
53 White cheese  
54 Smidgen  
55 French one  
56 Beiderbecke, of jazz