

# Ride the rails – at your own pace



Submitted  
Riders take in the scenery on the Joseph Branch Railroad along the Willowa River. The historic railroad is one of only two places in the country for such tours.

Interested in experiencing the pristine Willowa River country in Northeastern Oregon? Have an opportunity to see elk, deer, bear, fox, coyotes, river otters, and bald eagles, to mention just some of the more exciting critters in the area? Maybe stop and fish for trout or steelhead? By rail, at your own pace, with you providing the power?

We are talking about you and a partner, on a guided tour in a 100-pound bicycle-type cart on a railroad track. This is a simple framed cart with seats for two, with bike pedaling technology. It is 26 miles (marathon distance) through some spectacular scenery on the historic Joseph Branch Railroad.

Don't let the marathon bit tune you out. My wife, Jo, and her four Sweet Adeline friends (Jean, Joyce, Kathy and Marty) did it and had a ball. These ladies are not runners or gym rats. They all qualify for 10 percent off at Fred Meyer on the first Tuesday of the month.

The Joseph Branch Railriders is the only place in the country – except Maine – for such an experience on the rails.

Railriders offer two options: Joseph to Enterprise, 10 miles round trip, or Minam to Willowa, 26 miles round trip.

Our Sweet Ads opt for the 26-mile round trip, from Minam to Willowa, with a 1 percent incline. Keep in mind, these ladies are not bikers. Some don't even own a bicycle. It's August of the hottest, driest year in Oregon's history. This could be a challenge.



## On the Wild Side

by G.I. Wilson

"We met our guide, Hailey, at Minam at 9 a.m. Minam is the site of a former town, at the confluence of the Willowa and Minam rivers," Jo Wilson explains. We are prepared for our 26-mile challenge with backpacks, water, sun screen, and energy bars.

Hailey fits us with bicycle helmets and adjusts our seats for proper leg length.

Jean and Marty are in the first cart, Jo and Joyce in the next, and Kathy, with the guide, in the third cart. Behind them are four more carts with a group of folks that are there for fishing and a picnic as much as the ride. Five miles down the line is the first stop, the "blue box" (a.k.a. port-a-potty). This is the only "facility" until the turn around in Willowa. At one point, two carts stopped on the Willowa River to fish. They will turn their carts around for the return trip. The other two carts continue on the 26-mile round trip.

The first leg through the canyon is cool and comfortable, passing steep cliffs, timber, sounds of the river, and the serenade of clickity-clack wheels crossing rail joints.

After the canyon, the countryside opens up into cattle country. Lush summer growth is turning to late summer/fall colors. Wildlife abounds here. Deer are enjoying the shade near the cool Willowa waters. Temperatures rise significantly.

Crossroads are now part of the challenge. Carts must stop at all roads. Two paved roads require peddlers to get off and push the cart across. Along the route there are three barbed wire gates that need to be laid down and rolled over. Between the gates, horses and mules graze along the right-of-way.

At the turn around in Willowa, it is a short, two-block walk to the main street. Joseph Branch Railriders provide a map with restaurants to choose from, or if you bring your lunch, the city park is nearby. "We walk into town for lunch," Jo explains. "The other two carts leave immediately to join the fishermen for lunch." When you return to your cart, it is turned around, ready for your return trip.

It is nice to have the 1 percent downgrade on the return, unless you experience an afternoon canyon headwind. They arrive back at Minam at 4 p.m.

They are exhausted. Sleep will come easy with minds and lungs renewed by the high mountain air.

Joseph Branch Railriders is the brainchild of Kim and Anita Metlin, of Imbler. They saw a railroad running through beautiful scenery with minimal use. Why not come up with a use that is healthy, beautiful and fun. They researched the technology and the cart concept was developed. A Tualatin company built polymer tires that fit directly on the rails. A La-Grande company built the axles and frames.

The County Board of Commissioners approved a permit.

Kim says it's just plain fun. "We've been told all our lives that you can't play on the railroad. Well, now you can."

The 2015 season runs May 16 through Oct. 4. For reservations, call, 541-910-0089, 541-910-0981 or email jbrailriders@gmail.com. Tickets may be purchased during the operating season at 304 North Main Street, Joseph, Oregon. Reservations are encouraged for large groups.



## Ask Mr. Trash

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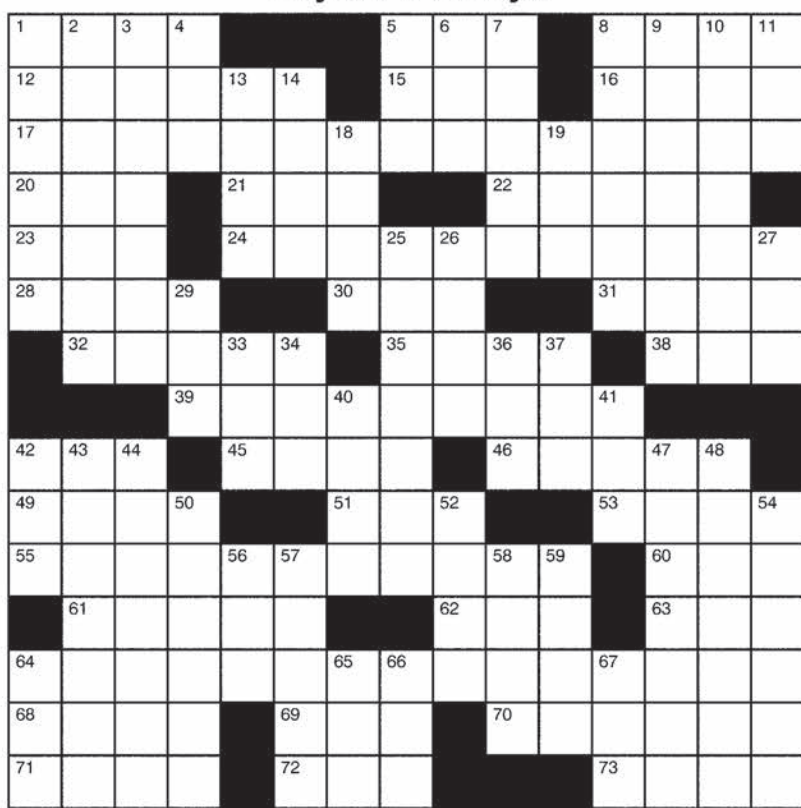
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## crossword

### Boys Will B Boys



CREATORS NEWS SERVICE

By Charles Preston

#### ACROSS

- 1 Mine entrance
- 5 AMA member
- 8 Celtic
- 12 Staccato's opposite
- 15 Marked period
- 16 \_\_\_ -do-well
- 17 Peter Grimes composer
- 20 Tome preface
- 21 Start for ami or ton
- 22 Trojan War epic
- 23 Queue after Q
- 24 Three-time Wimbledon winner
- 28 High schooler
- 30 Chemical suffix
- 31 Eliel's son
- 32 Canadian novelist Wiseman
- 35 Start of a famed palindrome
- 38 JFK sight
- 39 My Favorite Martian regular
- 42 Opposite of NNW
- 45 Wells' pleasure-loving race
- 46 Haute \_\_\_
- 49 Japanese equivalent of a purse
- 51 Transfer or messen-

ger: abbr.

- 53 Headland
- 55 Signs of Life star
- 60 Pretend
- 61 Lauder of cosmetics
- 62 Leatherworking tool
- 63 Fraternity letter
- 64 Star of Double Jeopardy
- 68 Mannheim mister
- 69 Geller, of spoon-bending fame
- 70 Smear
- 71 Deuce beater
- 72 Clinton's musical forte
- 73 Liberal \_\_\_

#### DOWN

- 1 Philosopher Camus
- 2 Domain of some divers
- 3 Set off
- 4 \_\_\_ Mahal
- 5 Cub Scout unit
- 6 Heavenly body
- 7 South American Indian
- 8 Allure
- 9 Improved film shoots
- 10 Farm machines
- 11 Bald-eagle look-alike
- 13 Poet/priest John Banister \_\_\_
- 14 Melville work
- 18 About
- 19 \_\_\_ du Diable
- 25 Stuck
- 26 Highway hauler
- 27 Go bad
- 29 Snout
- 33 Taradiddle
- 34 English length measure
- 36 Dismiss, in a way
- 37 TV network
- 40 Actress Singer
- 41 Over there
- 42 Bro or sis
- 43 Antagonist, often
- 44 Deletion
- 47 Apprentice
- 48 Uninherited land
- 50 Clamor
- 52 I've Got \_\_\_ in Kalamazoo
- 54 Wood ibises
- 56 Nectar gatherer
- 57 Picture puzzle
- 58 Woolly females
- 59 Feature of some skirts
- 64 Food preservative: abbr.
- 65 Zoological mouths
- 66 Year in Tiberius' reign
- 67 La's partner

The Keizer team swept their pool play opponents – Foot Hill, North Medford and Churchill high schools – to take first headed into bracket play.

"We started off in the first game with a different rotation, but we adapted really well. I think we had really good communication and supported each other really well," said Montano.

In the first match of bracket play, McNary battled hard with Bend High School and eventually emerged the victors. Set scores were 30-28 and 25-17. That win pitted the team against Roseburg High School and the long drive and longer day began to take its toll.

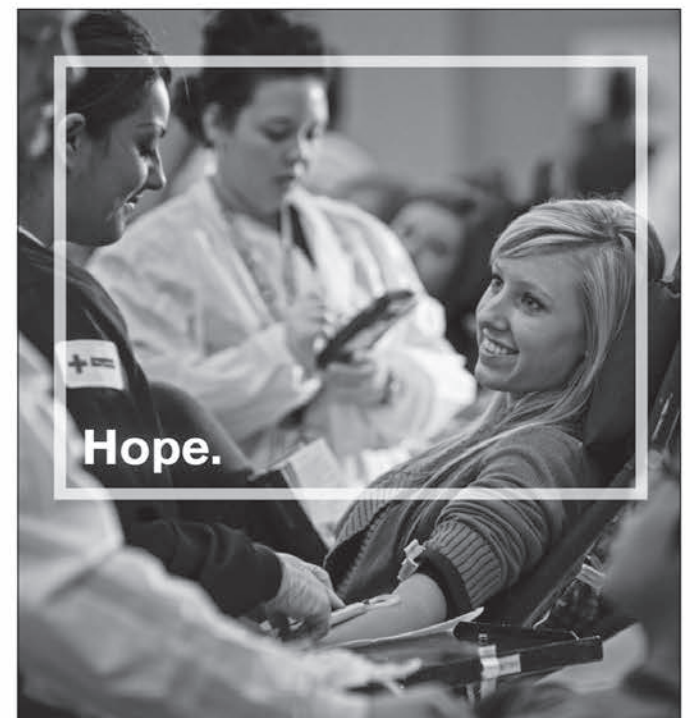
"We were talking a lot in the morning, but we got a little tired by the end of the day," said Gilmour.

The Lady Celts lost to Indians in sets of 25-15 and 25-22.

"Reina had a great tournament, she hit and blocked extremely well for us. Sydney Hunter also played well offensively. Both setters, Sam Van Voorhis and Madi Cloyd, did a great job distributing the ball to all our hitters. Shaylee Williams also had a very nice tournament," said Scholl.

Montano said she wanted to see the team focus on being more consistent with opponents North Salem and Sprague high schools who were next in line. Gilmour said the team still had room to grow.

"I think we're playing as a team, but we always have room to improve. I think we'll do fine against both teams," Gilmour said.



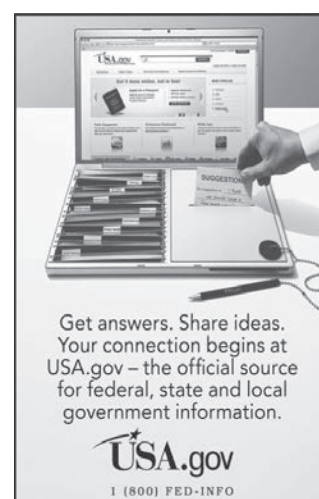
Hope.

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