

Remembering the weather goats of Mount Nebo

Goats were right 90 percent of the time

By DAN BAIN
The News Review

ROSEBURG — It's been more than 35 years since the world famous Mount Nebo weather goats found new homes after spending many years unknowingly forecasting the weather by their location on the mountain across the river from downtown Roseburg.

The herd consisted of only a small group of Angora goats originally. They were the true weather goats. But over the years, other goats joined the herd and followed the Angoras around the mountain.

From 1965 to 1979, the goats roamed Mount Nebo, and eventually, people who watched the herd, figured out they could get a good idea what the weather was going to be like the next day from the goats' movements. Those who kept track said the goats were about 90 percent right.

If the goats were at the top of the mountain, it was likely going to be dry and sunny the next day. And if they were down low, rain was likely on the way.

Ed Eaton was a teacher at Rose Elementary School in



This image taken in the 1970s shows weather goats on Mount Nebo in Roseburg.

Roseburg and his classes had a good view of Nebo and its four-legged inhabitants. He used the weather-predicting goats as a science project to see how accurate they were. He said they were pretty accurate.

"Yeah they were, it was funnier than heck, and the kids got a kick out of it," said Eaton. "I don't know the percentage, but it was pretty dang high."

During their days of glory, and after KRSB-FM Radio began doing a goat forecast, the goats became internationally known for their forecasting skills.

'Scattered goats'

The forecast might be "scattered goats," which was

mostly sunny, or a "low goat system," which meant wet weather was approaching.

The story was picked up by NBC-TV News, and then other media from around the world picked it up.

But when Interstate 5 was redone around the base of Mount Nebo, the face of the mountain was altered and it made it tougher for the goats to navigate the hillside. They became attracted to the tasty, green grass by the freeway intersection, which led to traffic problems. After a few goats were hit by traffic, officials decided they needed to do something.

They tried to fence the goats in, but the goats easily figured out how to get



The News-Review In this undated photo, state highway workers install goat crossing signs on Interstate 5 in Roseburg.

through or around that obstacle. So officials conducted a goat round-up and adopted out about half of the herd. The others went to a ranch north of Roseburg.

Goat controversy

Roseburg attorney Charles Lee got involved in a goat controversy in 1978 when he was a prosecutor with the District Attorney's office. He got the case involving two Lane County teens who were arrested for shooting a couple of goats with a bow and arrow. He said the public outcry was sympathetic toward the goats and called for the District Attorney's office to prosecute. But it wasn't that easy.

"Animal protection laws were different, and I had a hard time finding a crime," said Lee. "The owner of the property didn't want to claim the goats belonged to him, which would have made it a theft or livestock offense, because he didn't want to be responsible if they caused damage."

A 19-year-old from Springfield was eventually charged with "taking up an estray without first notifying the Department of Agriculture." But that charge was dismissed and he was charged instead with leaving an animal carcass in a field, a Class A Misdemeanor. He was fined \$505.

The juvenile in the case was not charged in adult court.

In February of 1978, two goats were killed by a car on Interstate 5 and that prompted the highway department to put up a goat crossing sign, thought to be the only one in the country at that time.

Mascot goat

Retired Roseburg veterinarian Dr. Don Bailey has a vivid memory of the goats.

"I've been accused of causing the whole thing down there," he said with a laugh.

He said a school in the Eugene area had a mascot

goat they wanted to get rid of and wanted to leave it at Wildlife Safari, but Bailey told the school that would not be good to have a domestic goat with the exotic animals there.

"I said as you go by Mount Nebo, just stop and turn it loose, and they did," he said. The offspring turned into a herd of gentle goats that ended up eating grass along the freeway, and occasionally flowers and shrubs in gardens, instead of predicting weather on the mountain.

Bailey also remembers climbing the face of the mountain to catch the goat that had been shot by an arrow. He found it and took the arrow out, then gave it a shot of penicillin and he said it was fine.

He also remembered two Roseburg boys that decided to have some fun with the weatherman and put a plywood mannequin of a goat on the mountain.

"The weatherman kept saying, the weather hasn't changed a bit according to the goats," Bailey said. "He eventually figured out the mannequin wasn't moving at all."

The goats are now just part of the colorful history of the Umpqua Valley, but many local residents still remember them well, and all the attention they brought to the area back in the 1960s and '70s.

Love pleads not guilty at arraignment

Charged with luring a minor, official misconduct

By KYLE SPURR
The Daily Astorian

Matt Love, an Oregon author and high school teacher, pleaded not guilty Tuesday to luring a minor and official misconduct. Love, 52, is accused of sending explicit messages to induce a former student to engage in sex.

He was arrested in July after being indicted by a grand jury.

According to the indictment, the alleged crimes occurred between November and May. Luring a minor is a Class C felony. Official misconduct is a Class A misdemeanor.

Police said the girl involved in the case was not a former student at Astoria High School and does not live in the area. The



Matt Love appears in Clatsop County Circuit Court with his lawyer Tuesday for an arraignment on charges of luring a minor and official misconduct.

Danny Miller/
The Daily Astorian

includes messages, not photographs.

Love, who appeared in court Tuesday, previously posted \$2,500 of a \$25,000 bail and was released from Clatsop County Jail after his arrest.

As a condition of his release, Love is to have no contact with minors, including the girl and her family.

Love is due back in court next month for an early resolution conference.

victim was under 18 at the time.

Love was placed on administrative leave by the Astoria School District in May. He resigned earlier this month.

About half a dozen of Love's students came to Clatsop County Circuit Court Tuesday to support him.

Jack Green, an attorney representing Love, said in court he

is concerned about incorrect information being shared by the District Attorney's Office. Green specifically cited an Oregonian article that indicated photographs were sent to the former student.

"It turns out that is not the case," Green said. "That is actually an incorrect statement."

Evidence in the case

WANTED

Alder and Maple Saw Logs & Standing Timber

Northwest Hardwoods • Longview, WA

Contact: Steve Axtell • 360-430-0885 or John Anderson • 360-269-2500

THC Fair

BOOTHS
SESSIONS

RAFFLES
& PRIZES

Astoria: Sept 3 - 4

CLATSOP COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS
92937 WALLUSKI LOOP, ASTORIA

Sat 10-6, Sun 11-5

Save \$\$, buy your ticket online at thcfair.com

COMING SEPTEMBER 16TH!

FALL/WINTER EVERYTHING AUTO

2016 DODGE CHALLENGER SRT HELLCAT

point S

TIRE FACTORY

EVERYTHING AUTO

To advertise contact: LISA CADONAU at 503-325-3211 or lcadonau@dailyastorian.com
BRANDY STEWART at 503-738-7561 or bstewart@dailyastorian.com

Publishes: Sept. 16, 2016
Publication is online at all of our websites via e-edition
Inserted in: The Daily Astorian and Chinook Observer

SEPTEMBER 1ST - 11TH

fall garden SALE

30% OFF

EVERYTHING IN THE STORE!

+ BUY ONE GET ONE *free* ON ALL POTTERY

(OF EQUAL OR LESSER VALUE)

DENNIS' 7 DEES

LANDSCAPING & GARDEN CENTERS

four convenient garden center locations

SE PORTLAND 6025 SE POWELL BLVD 503.777.1421	SW PORTLAND 10455 SW BUTNER RD 503.297.1058	LAKE OSWEGO 1090 MCVEY AVE 503.636.4660	SEASIDE 84794 HWY 101 503.738.6980
--	---	---	--

WWW.DENNIS7DEES.COM

Join us on Sat. Aug. 3rd from 10am-2pm for:

Free DENNIS' 7 DEES DESIGN DAY

@ all Dennis' 7 Dees Garden Center locations
Bring in pictures of your trouble area for free professional design guidance from Dennis' 7 Dees landscape designers.