

# Community Voices

## NATURAL PERSPECTIVE — FOR THE BIRDS



By EMILY J. UHRIG, PH.D.  
Special to Siuslaw News

With temperatures dipping, it's a good time to stay indoors, perhaps clutching some hot chocolate by a fire. While doing so, you may feel sorry for the little birds hopping about outside and decide to offer them food. Although our local species are adapted to cope with our climate, winter can be a challenging time for birds as food resources are scarcer and keeping warm in low temperatures requires extra energy.

Anyone who enjoys feeding backyard birds probably notices

their feeders increasing in popularity during cold weather. In our area, juncos, chickadees and other small birds often descend in droves, sometimes emptying feeders within hours.

In some ways, such feeding is beneficial. Studies have shown that supplementing birds' natural food sources with feeders can increase health and boost winter survival.

There are also benefits for humans as bird watching is fun pastime and attracting certain birds may help with insect control.

However, if not done responsibly, there are potential downsides to feeding wild birds.

While offering seeds, nuts or suet can be helpful to birds, feeding bread should be avoided. Indeed, the popular childhood activity of visiting a duck pond with a loaf of bread can actually be detrimental. For birds, bread is like a junk food: it has relatively little nutritional value, and a bird filling up on bread may have a reduced appetite for nutritious foods. Additionally, diets high in carbohydrates can lead to wing

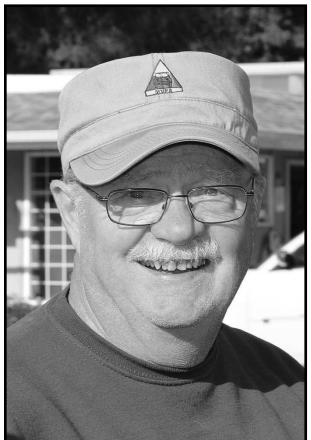
deformities that affect flight.

Beyond the type of food on offer, feeder hygiene can affect birds' health. Feeders can harbor harmful mold and bacteria. This is a particular concern if the food has become damp, which easily happens in our climate. Feeders can also spread disease among birds simply by bringing many individuals together in one place. To reduce these risks, feeders should be regularly cleaned. Simply taking them apart and washing them through the dishwasher is usually sufficient.

Another common hazard to birds visiting feeders is your home's windows. Particularly if there is a reflection of trees and sky, birds are prone to colliding with the glass, often fatally. To reduce such risks, try affixing decals to the window. Paper snowflakes are a seasonally fitting option, but, if you're less artistically inclined, sticky notes work too.

So, if you're feeding feathered friends this winter, take a moment to assess the health and safety factors. Then sit back with your cocoa and enjoy!

## MILITARY HERITAGE CHRONICLES — CIVIL WAR IN OREGON



By CAL APPLEBEE  
Special to Siuslaw News

of the annual battle between orange and green, not the battle between blue and grey that took place in the southeastern United States 158 years ago. Although the annual collegiate battle first took place nearly as far back in 1894, other than the common name reference, the similarities probably end there.

However, while none of the battles from the war between the states took place here in Oregon, that doesn't mean Oregon didn't feel the impacts from that war.

When the real Civil War started in 1861, Oregon was a fledgling state, having attained statehood only two years earlier. The United States Army

already had considerable presence in Oregon, but primarily because of conflicts between the growing number of settlers who were newcomers and the multiple native American tribes around the state, who had been here first.

As the troop demands for the Civil War increased, the North began withdrawing federal troops to feed that need. To fill the gap for keeping peace, volunteer cavalry replacements were recruited, and the 1st Oregon Cavalry was activated in 1862.

While numerous army posts were established around the state throughout our early years, Ft. Stevens was specifically designed to protect the mouth

of the Columbia River from potential Confederate raiders. Although the authorization act for its construction came out of Congress in 1862, the Civil War was over before Ft. Stevens was fully operational. It would however, go on to play significant roles in WWI and WWII.

The Civil War left its imprint on Oregon in other ways, besides the veterans who are buried in some of our local cemeteries. Ft. Stevens itself was named after Isaac Stevens, former Governor of Washington Territory, who, as a Union Officer, was killed in 1862 in the Battle at Chantilly.

Harney County in Eastern Oregon was named after William Harney, a Union Officer

who survived the Civil War, and known for his pre-war success with Indian tribes.

Baker County and Baker City were named after Edward Baker, another Union Officer killed in 1861 at the Battle of Balls Bluff.

Closer to home, Lane County was named after Joseph Lane, the first Governor of our State, but who was also a southern sympathizer and ran unsuccessfully for the vice presidency against the Lincoln ticket. Even after his retirement from political life to Douglas County, he remained a believer in separation of the states.

There are other connections between Oregon and the Civil War, and you can hear about

them plus more detail about the events mentioned here, at our next Military Heritage Day on Saturday, Feb. 23, at the Florence Municipal Airport.

Board Member and Volunteer Dave Burkett, a Civil War living historian, will regale you with more fascinating tidbits about this element of Oregon's military heritage.

Perhaps at the next collegiate Civil War match up, you'll have a different perspective of that game's title!

The Oregon Coast Military Museum is located at 2145 Kingwood St. in Florence and is open Wednesday through Sunday, noon to 4 p.m. You can learn more at [www.oregoncoastmilitarymuseum.com](http://www.oregoncoastmilitarymuseum.com).

## US TOO FLORENCE — MY PROSTATE CANCER JOURNEY — UPDATE & GIVING BACK



By TOM WILSON  
Special to Siuslaw News

The second part of my journey was first published in February 2015. After a steadily increasing PSA (Prostate Specific Antigen) and three biopsies, I was diagnosed with prostate cancer, Gleason Score 7. Nine of the 12 samples were

positive, with seven of them over 90 percent cancerous.

I decided to be treated with external beam radiation instead of surgery because there was a chance that the cancer had escaped the prostate gland and radiation, extending beyond the prostate, could kill any cancer in that area.

Because testosterone feeds prostate cancer, I was offered a clinical trial to lower my testosterone before starting external beam radiation. The clinical trial required me to take a pill every morning to lower the testosterone instead of an injection every few months, which is usually prescribed.

I started my nine-week, 45 treatments at Oregon Urology Institute's Radiation Center in Springfield on March 24, 2015, ending May 26. The clinical trial to keep my testosterone level

low ended on June 1. At that time, using a standard PSA test, my PSA was undetectable, and my testosterone level was 9. An average testosterone level is around 600 and low is anything under 250.

I continued getting PSA and testosterone tests monthly for three months and then was tested every four months until March 2016. At that time my PSA, using an ultra-sensitive test, was 0.032 and testosterone had come up to 146. Ultra-sensitive PSA tests continued at six-month intervals until February 2018 with PSA results of 0.054 and testosterone 259.

I am now on a one-year testing schedule and my latest results, as of January 2019, are PSA 0.093 and testosterone 301. It's normal for my PSA to fluctuate since I still have a prostate.

My urologist is Dr. Bryan Mehlhaff from the Oregon Urology Institute (OUI) in Springfield. At this time, he feels that my chances of being cured are good and recommends that I continue annual tests for the rest of my life. As long as my PSA tests do not begin to rise significantly, chances are that the cancer is gone.

My recommendation is that all men get a single PSA test in their mid-40s to establish a baseline and ensure that their PSA isn't elevated, then start annual testing in their 50s. One in six men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer in their lifetime. It is vitally important that prostate cancer be caught early and treated before symptoms develop.

Believe me, it's better to know than not know.

I continue to attend Us TOO

Florence Prostate Cancer Education and Support meetings monthly because I feel a responsibility to share (give back) some of my experiences and knowledge to help men who are just beginning their prostate cancer journey, like so many men did for me when I began my journey. These meetings are an excellent source of information for anyone who has questions or concerns about their prostate health.

The meetings are attended by prostate cancer survivors, men who are undergoing treatment, have recently been diagnosed or are just concerned about their prostate health. Spouses are encouraged to attend.

The meetings are the second and third Tuesday of each month, the first in the evening at 5 p.m., attended by Urologist Dr. Bryan Mehlhaff, and

the second at noon, attended by Urologist Dr. Roger McKimmy. Both meetings are held at the Ichiban Restaurant in Florence.

Giving back in another way, I recently started driving the Friends of Florence bus to Eugene and Springfield. This bus has been taking patients to the Willamette Valley Cancer and OUI's Radiation Center, Monday through Friday since 1985 and 2008, respectively.

This is a no-cost means of transportation to and from the medical centers for people receiving radiation treatments.

I highly recommend this volunteer job to anyone looking to help people in our community. It doesn't take a lot of your time, only one day per month, and is very rewarding.

If interested, contact Bart Mealer, 541-997-8663.

## THE MORAL OF THE STORY — A VERY BUSY DAY



By KAREN D. NICHOLS  
Special to Siuslaw News

After reading a joke on an email about fogey forgetfulness, I was motivated to write this true tale of woe.

Yesterday, I told Ralph that I was really mad that I hadn't accomplished a damn thing all day!

Nothing!  
Ralph scratched his head. "That simply isn't true! Just

think back at everything you've done. You'll see."

So, here's my list.  
Got up. Took a swim. Dried and dressed.

Couldn't find bananas.  
Ate breakfast anyway. Cleared the breakfast table while Ralph loaded the dishwasher. Answered emails.

Froze gravy and chicken to make a potpie later. Assembled and packed food to give to a friend.

Was temporarily indisposed. Combed hair. Brushed teeth. Lost sunglasses.

Looked for sunglasses but gave up.

Assisted Ralph in finding Friend's house and avoiding hump in driveway. Delivered food. Hugged Friend and said we'd see each other soon.

Hung out with Ralph on his drive to the gas station and waited while the tank filled. Accompanied Ralph to buy

oil for the car. Waited in the car.

Came home. Found glasses case and searched for sunglasses.

Instead, found bananas in pantry where I hid them from myself, under cards and papers that I whisked from the counter before guests arrived. The bananas were too rotten even for banana bread. (Unfortunately, I accused someone of stealing them!)

Disposed of the bananas.

Looked for sunglasses. Found the glasses next to the basin where I combed my hair.

Ralph grinned. "See! I told you that you had accomplished a lot, I counted 20 items on your list."

What do you think? Did I?

**The moral of the story: Something is not nothing.**

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