



OPINION

Offbeat Oregon History

How to rob railroad trains with dynamite: Tips from the pros

BY FINN J.D. JOHN
For the Sentinel

In a bit of a break with the usual format of Offbeat Oregon History, today I'm going to share with you the text of a promotional brochure mailed out shortly before the First World War by notorious criminal mastermind/ motivational speaker Blackie DuQuesne*:

DYNAMITE-ENHANCED TRAIN ROBBERY TECHNIQUES: LEARN THE SECRETS OF THE PROS!

Dear Aspiring Train Robbers:

Look, boys, I understand. Being an express robber isn't the easy gig it used to be, back in the 1880s when the hills were full of stagecoaches with gold in the boots and 'rob me' signs taped to the back windows. In fact, I expect some of you boys are in the same boat as poor old Bill Miner — reading this in prison, after trying to use your stage-robbing skills on one of the railroad trains that replaced them. I don't guess I have to tell you so, but that just don't work. Luckily, I'm here to tell you what does:

Dynamite.

Yep, that's right. There are dozens of ways you can build a satisfying and profitable train-robbing career with this modern wonder, and zero ways you can do so without it. Yes, add dynamite to your business today — and start enjoying the lifestyle of a successful train robber tomorrow.

But watch out. Dynamite is tricky. It can — heh heh — backfire on you if you don't know what you're doing. And that's why you need me — and my special correspondence course on Dynamite-Enhanced Train Robbing Techniques. This course will teach you and your team of robbers how to stay safe AND effective in using this modern miracle product to grow your train-robbing business.

Here's just a taste of what you'll learn:

Robbing passengers:

I'm going to give it to you straight: If you're wanting to learn how to rob the passengers on a train, don't buy this course, because you're too dumb to teach. Seriously, bub, there are 40 citizens in the car, half of them with revolvers in their pockets, and you think you're going to just waltz down the aisle robbing 'em one after another? Good luck with that.

The smart operators never do this. That's how poor old Charles Manning got it when the Meadors-Stoner Gang knocked over the Portland-Chicago train in Kamela back in July 1914 — remember that? A lawman at the back of the car had a six-gun and knew how to use it. It's pretty hard to finish a train-robbing job once one of your team members has been picked off like that, and it's hard to get away clean once things have gone that badly south. Pro tip: When you're running for your life, you tend to leave clues behind.

Now, some of my competitors will tell you that if you've got dynamite, you actually can rob passengers. Maybe they're right — but it's still mighty risky. My old pals John Case and James Poole found that out when they pulled the Cow Creek Canyon job in July 1895. John and Jim lit off a stick every couple minutes or so, just to remind the passengers that if they tried anything funny, the whole works would go up in splinters. They got the loot and got away. But one of them passengers made 'em, and they got picked up later. The best advice is, leave the passengers be.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Opt-out sought

Last school year, the schools of South Lane School District had a just and sensible drug testing policy. It allowed schools to drug-test students when there was a reasonable cause to do so. Schools are allowed to drug-test based on much flimsier evidence than is allowed in law enforcement, and that is because they have a responsibility to the rest of the student body. This school year, the board decided all by themselves that they should drug test anyone wishing to take advantage of extracurricular opportunities. The testing began with the ath-

letes this year, pulling kids out of class to urinate for an adult. Next year, the board is considering extending their reach to all the clubs, band and theater activities and down to the 12-year old middle schoolers.

Many parents are opposed to this authoritarian approach. They believe that they are the real authorities in their children's lives and prefer to control any intrusive examination of their offspring. Many of the students subject to the new rules are offended and grieved that they have been placed under suspicion and subsequently stonewalled by their teachers and supervisors when they objected. Having

met these young adults, I wonder at the school board's need to test these highly accomplished and gifted students.

At the next board meeting on Feb. 2 at 5:30 p.m., an item will be presented to include in the policy the choice of the parents to opt out of pre-emptive drug testing. We hope that interested parties will attend the meeting to support the right of parents to make these decisions. Come early if you wish to sign up to speak.

Sheila Hudson
Cottage Grove



School and Community Gardens: A growing movement

BY SUSTAINABLE COTTAGE GROVE
For the Sentinel

As this spring-like winter moves toward actual spring, the thoughts of many area residents turn to gardening. The Cottage Grove area enjoys several community-oriented gardens that serve schools, local neighborhoods, or both. Recent discussions among Grovers representing a broad range of interests have led to exciting opportunities to increase the number of such gardens in our region. If you'd like to help any of the following gardens thrive, please call 541-942-2360 for more information.

Existing gardens (not a complete list)

Harrison Elementary School: A very successful school garden in which lots of students spend a lot of time and take a lot of pride. Adult volunteers who live nearby tend the garden during the summer months when school is out and are looking forward to using a recent grant to improve the garden this year.

Bohemia Elementary School: A hybrid garden of sorts; plots are worked by folks from around town, and students from the school visit and "work" in it during the spring and fall sessions. The garden may have some open plots this year and needs a small infrastructural investment (underground irrigation, tool shed, etc.). It also needs an assistant manager to help maintain the garden throughout the growing season.

Community Sharing: A garden run by some of the staff at Community Sharing; all of the nutritious, great-tasting produce from the garden goes to Community Sharing clients. Volunteer workers from the community would be most welcome.

Possible gardens

Cottage Grove High School: Currently attracting the most attention. A fenced site with water supply already exists; sweat and materials are needed to bring the raised beds into production. Many members of the Cottage Grove community, including staff and students at CGHS, are discussing more ways to provide

opportunities for CGHS students and community members to grow, harvest and process high-quality food.

Trailhead Park: An existing architectural plan filed with the city includes sites for a community garden and a community orchard. Lots of work is needed at these sites, but...imagine heirloom apples, or Asian pears, or other delicious fruit trees, plus a sunny community garden, both in the middle of downtown, with easy car and bus access from Main Street!

Other privately owned sites have also been discussed; currently, they are on the back burner because they require more regulatory action (e.g., provisional use permit). They are still on the radar, though! In addition, other possible sites probably exist. If you know of one and want to propose it, please let us know.

Dozens of motivated community members have volunteered to maintain existing school and community gardens, and to develop new ones. We invite you to join us! Call 541-942-2360 for more information about ways to get involved.

For bones, Vitamin D is more important than calcium

BY JOEL FUHRMAN, MD
For the Sentinel

About 10 million Americans already have osteoporosis, and 34 million are at risk. Contrary to popular belief, low intake of calcium is not the primary cause of osteoporosis. Americans have some

of the highest calcium intakes in the world, but we also have one of the highest hip fracture rates in the world.



Calcium taken into the body is either deposited into bone or excreted in urine. The standard American diet — including large amounts of salt, caffeine, sugar, and animal products — causes much of the calcium that Americans consume to get excreted in their urine. Milk and other dairy products are no exception. The Nurses' Health Study followed 72,337 women for over 18 years and found that dairy intake did not reduce the risk of osteoporosis-related hip fractures. In contrast, vegetables, beans, fruits, and nuts are rich sources of phytonutrients (including calcium) that do not promote urinary loss of calcium.

Vitamin D also plays a critical role in regulating bone density. Vitamin D enables the absorption of calcium in the intestine and stimulates activity of bone building cells. The most natural way to obtain Vitamin D is through sun exposure, but because of indoor jobs, our climate, and skin cancer risk it is

very difficult to achieve optimal levels of Vitamin D safely from the sun. Vitamin D supplementation is the best option.

Since Vitamin D and calcium work together to maintain healthy bone, how much of each are necessary to protect against osteoporosis? Most Americans take inadequate amounts of Vitamin D and excessive amounts of calcium.

Not enough Vitamin D: Vitamin D supplements of 800-2000 IU were effective in medical studies to protect against osteoporosis-related fractures; however most multivitamins contain only 400 IU, and about 50 percent of Americans have insufficient blood Vitamin D levels. According to a review of the research on the subject, Vitamin D blood levels (measured by a 25(OH)D test) should be range between 36-48 ng/ml in order to achieve maximal health benefits — Vitamin D is not only important for bones, but also for cardiovascular

health, mood and cancer prevention — Vitamin D has actions in every cell of the human body. I recommend getting a blood test and supplementing accordingly to keep Vitamin D levels in the range of 35-50 ng/ml. If you have not had your blood tested, 2000 IU is a reasonable dose to supply your body with adequate Vitamin D.

Too much calcium: Taking too much calcium is a concern because excess calcium may actually interfere with the bone-protective effects of Vitamin D. In an analysis of several studies, low-dose calcium supplements (500 mg) combined with Vitamin D were found to reduce osteoporosis fracture rates, but high dose calcium supplements (1000 mg or more) combined with Vitamin D did not reduce fracture rates.

Furthermore, recent research has revealed that high-dose calcium supplements may increase the risk of cardiovascular disease. Much of the scientific

community agrees that calcium recommendations for Americans have been set too high. The World Health Organization advises an intake of 500 mg, whereas the U.S. Institute of Medicine recommends 1000 mg. Calcium should not be taken in excess, and I recommend limiting supplemental calcium to 400-600 mg. Most of your calcium should be derived from a diet laden with vegetables — a healthful plant-based diet plus vitamin D supplements and exercise is the best strategy for bone health.

Dr. Fuhrman is a New York Times best-selling author and board certified family physician specializing in lifestyle and nutritional medicine. Visit his informative website at DrFuhrman.com. Submit your questions and comments about this column directly to news-questions@drfuhrman.com.

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Personal attacks and name calling in response to letters are uncalled for and unnecessary.

If you would like to submit an opinion piece, Another View must be no longer than 600 words.

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