



OPINION

Offbeat Oregon History

Former Albany newsman saved Crater Lake for a state park

BY FINN J.D. JOHN
For the Sentinel

In Oregon, there's one place where you're allowed to fish for free — and you've got a former Albany newspaper owner to thank for that.

It's in Oregon's famous Crater Lake where you can wet a line without paying The Man. Yet very few people ever do, because the lake is one of the largest bodies of water in the state — not in terms of surface area, of course, but it's so deep it holds an enormous amount of water — and the fish colony isn't big.

It's free because the fish aren't actually supposed to be there. Crater Lake never had fish in it before, and that's part of why its water is so clear and brilliantly blue.

So how did the fish get there? Well, that gets back to the newspaper man. His friends called him Will Steel, but when he founded the Albany Herald in 1880, his name was listed as William Gladstone Steel.

Steel was originally from Ohio, where his family participated in the Underground Railroad before the Civil War; his family later moved to Portland, and he graduated from high school there in 1873.

Seven years later, Steel went into the newspaper business, founding the Albany Herald as a Republican challenger to the town's dominant newspaper, the States Rights Democrat.

The Herald would soldier on for half a century before being absorbed into its rival to form today's Albany Democrat-Herald; but its founder didn't stick with it nearly that long. By 1885 he was back up in Portland working as superintendent of mail carriers, a job secured for him by his brother, who had the plump political-patronage job of Postmaster there.

In that summer, Steel took a vacation from his job to make his first journey to Crater Lake. He took a friend with him, and by chance met up with two other pilgrims, including Capt. Clarence Dutton of the U.S. Geological Survey — who would in later years be probably his most valuable ally in the fight to preserve the lake.

Upon his return, Steel soon found that he no longer had a job with the Post Office. After 25 years of Republican dominance, the White House had been won by Democrat Grover Cleveland, and political plums like the Postmastership of Portland were not to be left in the hands of Republicans. The Steel Brothers were out.

But for Will, the timing couldn't have been better. Suddenly at loose ends, he was free to act on the powerful feelings his visit to the lake had inspired. Back east he raced to Washington, D.C., where, with Dutton's support, he convinced the president who'd fired him shortly before to

block settlement in the area until it could be surveyed. Then Steel returned to Portland, hired a survey crew and had three boats built and hauled to the lake, where they floated out on the water to take soundings.

Steel found he hadn't brought enough line. He suggested that the lake might in fact be bottomless. Finally, with more line, the crew found the deepest part — at just shy of 2,000 feet.

After getting Steel's report, Congress introduced a bill to preserve the lake and 36 square miles of the surrounding terrain as a national park — and the fight was on. There were a lot of trees on those 36 square miles, and several companies wanted to turn those trees into money. There was also plenty of opportunity to run sheep on the land, particularly in the eastern part, and the grazing interests were if anything more intransigent than the timber seekers.

Steel fought tirelessly for his park. Realizing that outdoorsmen (yes, men — remember, this was the late 1880s) could help his cause, Steel decided to stock the lake with trout. So he offered some kids in Rogue River a dime for each minnow they caught. They brought him 600. A very worried (and out-of-pocket) Steel asked them what they wanted for the lot, and they requested four bits. Relieved, Steel gave them each a buck and took the minnows 45 miles to the lake. At each stream, he stopped to freshen the water, but most of them were dead by the time he got to the lake. Still, 37 of the original 600 survived to initiate the present-day problem there — although most of the fish in the lake today are descendants of the tens of thousands of hatchery fingerlings with which the lake was stocked in the early 1900s.

Steel also, during that time, founded the Oregon Alpine Club — a diverse outfit composed of campers and outdoorspeople of all sorts — possibly with the same idea in mind: More appreciators of nature meant more support for his lake. A few years later, he organized the state's famous Mazama Club, open only to people who'd climbed Mount Hood.

Finally, after a 17-year fight with the timber and grazing interests in Congress, Steel saw his dream realized. In 1902, Congress officially made Crater Lake the nation's fifth national park.

By that time, Steel's was the name most associated with the park. Without his efforts, it almost certainly would not have happened; and when he started styling himself the "father of Crater Lake" no one objected.

But it wasn't all roses and laurels and victory laps. When the park was created, the government passed over Steel and named William Arendt, a rancher from Klamath Falls, to the

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SIT KNEEL STAND RANT REPEAT...



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Swinging bridge outrage

According to the recent Sentinel reporting, the City was informed in 2002 by OBEC that repairs to the swinging bridge should be done as soon as possible.

That's 14 years ago, folks! Nothing was done. Then, again on Sept. 14 of this year, the same consulting firm stated that the bridge is in critical con-

dition.

The obvious question is where the original report and recommendation was sitting for the past 14 years? In the private sector this negligence wouldn't be tolerated! But hey, we are talking about our own city government. The obvious people who should know are: the City Manager, the Director of Public Works and the City Engineer. Just makes sense, right?

We as community members are owed an explanation regarding what hap-

pened and who is responsible for this fiasco.

Let's hope that the involved people take full responsibility in the name of transparency. If not, then they should start looking for another job.

Meanwhile, the city management may be interested in purchasing another golf course?

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Cottage Grove

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Eat nutrient-rich apples this fall

BY JOEL FUHRMAN, MD
For the Sentinel

Crisp, juicy apples are a fall tradition. Take advantage of the bountiful selection

of apples available this time of year. There are hundreds of varieties to sample. They range from red to yellow to green, crunchy to tender, sweet to tart and simple to complex.

Apples contain a wide variety of phytochemicals, many of which have been found to have strong antioxidant activity. They are particularly high in quercetin, a flavonoid antioxidant. Epidemiological studies have linked the consumption of apples with reduced risk of some cancers, cardiovascular disease, asthma, diabetes and obesity. Not only

can eating an apple a day help keep the doctor away, an apple a day might keep the pounds away too; adding apples to the diet has been shown to enhance weight loss. To optimize phytochemical content, it is important to eat the pigment-rich apple skin, not just the flesh. Choose whole, organic apples over applesauce or apple juice.

Apples are also a rich source of pectin, a type of soluble fiber that is found in plant cell walls and tissues. This soluble fiber works to lower cholesterol by reducing the amount that is absorbed in the intestines. Studies have shown that the pectin in apples interacts with other apple phytonutrients to achieve an even greater reduction in cholesterol. Researchers have also discovered that apples can boost

intestinal health by increasing the numbers of healthy gut bacteria that feed on apple pectin.

Portable and easy to pack, apples are great to include in your on-the-go meals. For an easy dessert, enjoy them baked with a sprinkle of cinnamon and nutmeg. I like to dice an apple, toss it with baby greens, some chickpeas, maybe a handful of walnuts or pumpkin seeds and then top it off with flavored vinegar or perhaps a dressing made from nuts and seeds.

Experiment with the many different varieties of apples to discover which ones are your favorites. Have fun seeking out your local organic apple growers, farm stands and farmers markets and look for different types of interesting apples. They do not have to look perfect. The

smaller and more imperfect they look, the better they taste. If you go apple picking and get lots of them, don't worry — you can store them for several months. Just wrap each apple in a paper towel to prevent them from touching each other and store in a closed cardboard box in a cool place such as the basement or garage.

Dr. Fuhrman is a #1 New York Times best-selling author and a 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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