

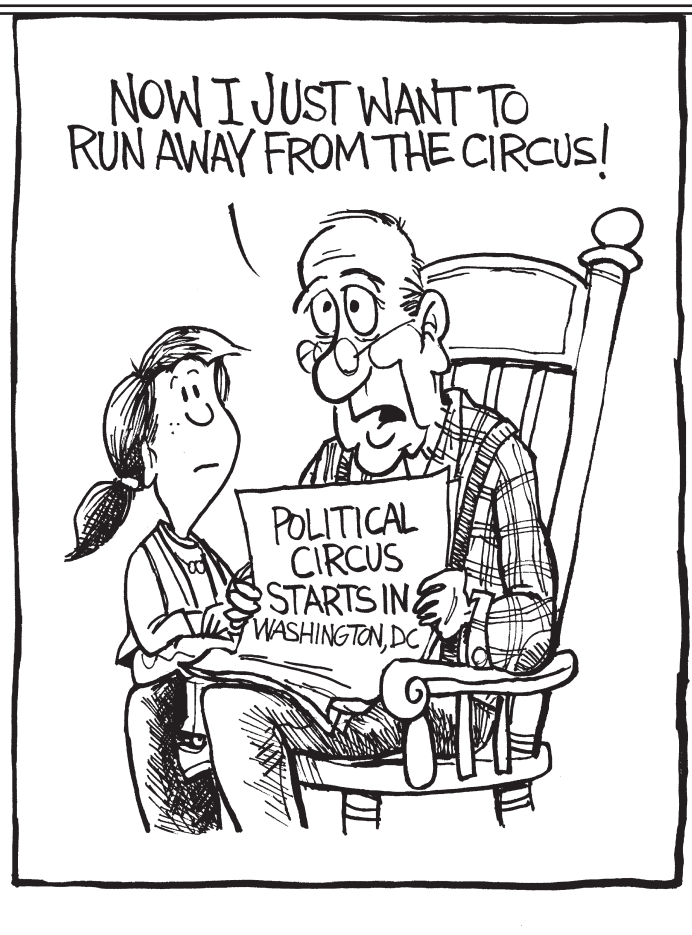


LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

For the past 10 years, Jon Stinnett highlighted all aspects of our community while striving to elevate the journalistic level of the Sentinel with every edition he put to bed. Working with a small writing staff and limited budget, Jon managed to turn out a quality small town paper every week. Who knows how many thousands of words he wrote, events he covered, and miles he walked to keep us informed and aware of the people and activities in and around Cottage Grove. I want to express my gratitude to Jon for the love and dedication he has shown to our town with his honest reporting and heartfelt editorials. The Sentinel and Cottage Grove are better for Jon's efforts, and we're fortunate he will continue to call our community "home."

Cristina Hubbard
Cottage Grove

Have an idea for a story? Has something in town caught your attention? Want to vent about an issue in the community? Write a letter to the Editor or stop by Coffee with the Editor every Tuesday at 10 a.m. at Backstage Bakery.



Offbeat Oregon History

For Milwaukie gas station owner, bomber trip was wild adventure

BY FINN JD JOHN
For the Sentinel

Art Lacey was in serious trouble. It was the summer of 1947, and he was about 50 feet above an Oklahoma airfield, at the controls of the biggest airplane he'd ever flown — a four-engined B-17G Flying Fortress, one of hundreds of the heavy bombers that the government was selling as surplus in the wake of the Second World War. This one was his; he had just bought it for \$13,000. But now the landing gear were stuck in the retracted position, and it looked like he was about to crash it.

This wouldn't have been such a big deal if it weren't for his "co-pilot." Art, not wanting to bother with getting someone to tag along with him, had brought a dressmaker's mannequin borrowed from a friend, dressed it in flight gear and propped up in the seat, to fool the airfield manager into thinking there were two guys in the cockpit. After crashing the plane and 'fessing up to this bit of deception, Art knew he would be in a less-than-optimal bargaining position vis-à-vis the defect in the plane he'd bought.

Still, that was all in the future. For now, the number-one goal was to not die in a giant fireball following a botched attempt at a gear-up landing. He lined the plane up as best he could with the runway and prepared to do his best.

Art's whole crazy scheme had its genesis when he first learned about the surplus B-17s. They were super-cheap, selling for not much above their scrap value, because there just weren't very many practical civilian uses for an obsolete heavy bomber. Art, already a successful Milwaukie businessman, had started stewing over how he might take advantage of the low prices on the big warbirds. The more he thought about it, the cooler he thought it would look to have one of them perched above the gas pumps at his gas station on McLoughlin Boulevard. The wings could serve as a roof over the pumps, and there would be room for a lot of them. And best of all, it wouldn't cost that much more than a stick-built structure of similar size.

According to Art's daughter, Punky Scott, in an interview with KATU-TV Channel 2 News, the scheme he developed remained just a scheme until someone put money on the line. At his birthday party, he shared his vision of a "Bomber Gas Station" with a friend, who laughingly told him he was dreaming. Art promptly put up a \$5 bet, which was just as promptly accepted, and just like that the whole crazy dream was turned into a serious plan.

Art immediately turned to a friend who, Punky suggested, was well connected with the dark side of Portland business — untaxed liquor, gambling, pinball machines, that sort of thing. "Got any money on you?" he asked. "I need \$15,000." "And the guy had it on him," Punky said in her interview. "I don't know how that translates into today's money, but it's got to be a lot."

It is \$15,000 in 1947 is the equivalent of \$160,000 today — a pretty impressive wad for "walking-around money."

Loaded down with this borrowed loot, Art made the journey to Oklahoma to buy his B-17. He had \$13,000 for the plane and \$2,000 for fuel and miscellaneous expenses on the way back.

Trouble started immediately upon arrival. After selling him the plane, the manager told him to bring his co-pilot the following day and he'd have the bird gassed up and ready. But Art hadn't realized he'd need a co-pilot, so he hadn't brought one.

He also hadn't given much thought to the fact that he'd never flown a four-engine bomber in his life. He was a skilled private pilot of single-engine planes, but this was very different.

Still, Art was determined to have his plane. So he returned the next day with the borrowed mannequin, strapped it into the copilot's seat, breezed into the manager's office and walked out ready to fly home.

Hoping to familiarize himself with the big aircraft a bit before he started flying it for real, he started out with a few passes, touch-and-gos, and gentle turns — the yoke in one hand and the flight manual in the other. And it was going pretty well, he thought. But then he realized that the

landing gear was stuck.

He flew the plane around for a while, trying to figure out how to get it unstuck. If his co-pilot hadn't been a dummy, he could have sent it down to try to pry something loose or bang on things; but that wasn't an option, and he certainly wasn't comfortable leaving the controls to try it himself. Finally he realized he'd just have to bring the plane in on its belly and hope for the best.

So down came Art Lacey in his new, doomed warbird, landing in a shower of sparks with a screech of tearing metal.

Although the cat was now out of the bag, the manager felt bad about the broken landing gear — and probably a little relieved, too, since his customer wasn't dead.

"He turned to his secretary and said, 'Have you written up the bill of sale yet on that B-17?'" Punky recounted. "And she said no, and he said, 'Worst case of wind damage I've ever seen.' And so he sold him a second B-17."

The second plane set Art back just \$1,500 — a special deal the manager made him, knowing he'd spent all his money on the first one.

Of course, faking the copilot was no longer going to work, so Art called his wife long-distance and asked her to send two of his friends down with a case of whiskey. The booze was to be used to bribe the local fire department to pump the fuel out of the old B-17 and into the new one using their fire truck, and it was a powerful enticement; Oklahoma was still a dry state at the time.

Everything worked as planned, although Art had to kite a check in Palm Springs to refuel the big plane; luckily, he made it home to cover his paper before it could bounce.

But when he got home, Art found his troubles had just begun. The city of Portland wouldn't issue permits to bring the plane from the airport. It was just too big, even after the wings were dismantled.

But Art was in so deep now, there was no turning back. He scheduled the move for the dark of night, well after the bars had all closed. He hired two teenagers with hot cars to accompany the motorcade, with instructions to floor it and race

off recklessly into the night if the police should appear — the idea being to draw the cops away from the plane. The truck drivers were instructed that under no circumstances were they to stop before they arrived at the gas station, no matter who ordered them to. And he promised to pay any tickets anyone was written by any cop for his or her part in the move.

The move's only mishap was a drunk driver who, seeing an airplane bearing down on him, thought he'd accidentally driven out onto an airfield and panicked and skidded into the ditch.

City Hall officials were, of course, furious. But after their initial attempts to punish Art resulted in some very unflattering newspaper coverage, they gave it up, fined him \$10, declared victory and went home.

Art was able to pay half his fine with the \$5 collected from his friend. He promptly had his airplane mounted above the gas pumps and renamed the place "The Bomber." And there it sat for the next 63 years, bringing in hundreds of thousands of curious gawkers and customers alike.

Over the years the Laceys added a restaurant and a small hotel. In the early 1990s they closed the gas pumps, and the big B-17 started to look increasingly forlorn up there, exposed to the weather and the occasional predations of vandals.

Then, in 1996, the family decided to do something about it — and the B-17 Alliance was born, dedicated to restoring the "Lacey Lady," as they've dubbed the bomber.

Currently the bomber is in the B-17 Alliance Museum and Restoration, located at McNary Airfield in Salem (3278 25th St. SE). The museum is open Fridays through Sundays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The multi-million-dollar restoration still has a ways to go before it's successfully completed, and the Alliance is working to raise the necessary funds to get it done; when it is, the Lacey Lady will be one of just seven B-17s remaining in flyable condition. Full details of their project are at www.b17alliancegroup.com.



The importance of Vitamin D

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 nat-

ural 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.

Cottage Grove Sentinel

116 N. Sixth Street • P.O. Box 35 • Cottage Grove, OR 97424

ADMINISTRATION:
JOHN BARTLETT, Regional Publisher
GARY MANLY, General Manager
207 • publisher@cgsentinel.com

SPORTS DEPARTMENT:
SAM WRIGHT, Sports Editor
204 • swright@cgsentinel.com

AARON AMES, Marketing Associate
216 • aames@cgsentinel.com
TAMMY SAYRE, Marketing Associate
213 • tsayre@cgsentinel.com

CUSTOMER SERVICE
CARLA WILLIAMS, Office Manager
Ext. 201 • cwilliams@cgsentinel.com
LEGALS
Ext. 200 • cwilliams@cgsentinel.com

NEWS DEPARTMENT:
CAITLYN MAY, Editor
Ext. 212 • cmay@cgsentinel.com

GRAPHICS:
RON ANNIS, Graphics Manager

(USP 133880)

Subscription Mail Rates in Lane and Portions of Douglas Counties:
Ten Weeks.....\$9.10
One year.....\$36.15
e-Edition year.....\$36.00

Rates in all other areas of United States: Ten Weeks \$11.70; one year, \$46.35, e-Edition \$43.00.

In foreign countries, postage extra.

No subscription for less than Ten Weeks. Subscription rates are subject to change upon 30 days' notice. All subscriptions must be paid prior to beginning the subscription and are non-refundable.

Periodicals postage paid at Cottage Grove, Oregon.

Postmaster: Send address changes to P.O. Box 35, Cottage Grove, OR 97424.

Local Mail Service:

If you don't receive your Cottage Grove Sentinel on the Wednesday of publication, please let us know. Call 942-3325 between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m.

Advertising ownership:

All advertising copy and illustrations prepared by the Cottage Grove Sentinel become the property of the Cottage Grove Sentinel and may not be reproduced for any other use without explicit written prior approval.

Copyright Notice:

Entire contents ©2015 Cottage Grove Sentinel.

Letters to the Editor policy

The Cottage Grove Sentinel receives many letters to the editor. In order to ensure that your letter will be printed, letters must be under 300 words and submitted by Friday at 5 p.m. Letters must be signed and must include an address, city and phone number or e-mail address for verification purposes. No anonymous letters will be printed. Letters must be of interest to local readers.

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.

To avoid transcription errors, the Sentinel would prefer editorial and news content be sent electronically via email or electronic media. Hand written submissions will be accepted, but we may need to call to verify spelling, which could delay the publishing of the submission.