

LOST RING FINDS ITS WAY HOME

The perseverance of a stranger brings a wedding band back to its owner two years later

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — Call it an early Christmas miracle.

In November 2014, David Bailey was elk hunting in the Blue Mountains between Heppner and Ukiah. The weather was cold, and the snow more than half a foot deep. He climbed back in his truck, parked in a lot off Highway 53, and started to take off his gear.

"I suddenly noticed that my wedding ring was gone," he said. "I got to thinking about all the places I stopped along the way and took off my gloves."

David searched part of the approximately four miles he trekked, but to no avail. The snow was too deep.

Defeated, he went back to his truck.

"I got a little emotional," he recalled. "That ring had been on my finger for 42 years."

David drove to a spot he knew there was cell service and called his wife, Vicki, to tell her what happened.

"She was kind of disappointed," he said.

He mentally retraced his steps with the intention of going back in the spring with a metal detector to find his ring.

That didn't happen.

"He'd been pretty upset



JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer

A man and his son found David's lost wedding ring while stopping for a meal during the spring of 2015. The man put up signs in plastic bags.

about it," Vicki Bailey said of her husband.

He inquired about replacing the gold band and replicating the inscription. In 1972, the ring and inscription cost \$69.95.

Replacing it would have cost \$953. David decided to hold off on buying a new ring.

"That's a good chunk of change," he explained.

In the spring of 2015, a man and his son were out in the Blue Mountain wilderness target shooting.

The pair stopped to eat in a parking area off Highway 53 and during the meal, something shiny caught the son's eye. He went to investigate and found a gold ring with the inscription, "VM 9/16/72 DB" on it. Correctly believing it to be a wedding ring, he was filled with a

sense of urgency to return the ring to its owner.

The father-and-son team made two signs, put them in plastic bags and posted them at the parking lot. Then they tried to use the date on the ring to find a marriage license matching the initials. Searching for the proverbial needle in the haystack, they came up empty.

Until the fall of 2015.



JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer

Vicki and David show off their wedding bands.

That's when David and Vicki's friend, Les Larson, who lives in Heppner, was in the same area scouting hunting locations. He saw the sign in the tree, but was too far away to read it. Not wanting to get out in a downpour, he drove closer and took out his binoculars to read "Found — Man's wedding band." The sign had a number to call.

Les, who was part of David and Vicki's wedding party, called them with the number.

David called, and of course, there was no answer. He left a message describing the ring.

Not 30 seconds later his

phone rang. The voice on the other line said: "You nailed it. That's the ring I have."

"It was kind of amazing," David said. "How often does that happen?"

David arranged for his friends to pick up the ring from the man, who requested anonymity.

"He didn't feel like it was anything special," David said.

David has a different opinion, noting that the man would check regularly for months to see if the signs he put up remained, in hopes that the person who lost the ring would return and see them.

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Christmas Worship

The Road to Bethlehem

<p>DECEMBER 24 6:00 PM CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE <i>(Childcare Not Provided)</i></p>	<p>DECEMBER 25 10:00 AM CHRISTMAS DAY WORSHIP SERVICE <i>(Nursery Care Provided)</i></p>
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