

MEMORABLE MEMORIAL

Couple's legacy preserved at Silver Butte



JAYSON JACOBY
ON THE TRAIL

I came to the mountain hoping to earn a view, one which refreshed my affinity for the wild places where people rarely go, places where I'm more likely to see a bear track than a Snickers wrapper.

Indeed I couldn't see a soul.
(Or a Snickers wrapper.)

But as I stood atop Silver Butte, at the edge of the North Fork John Day Wilderness, it was not the expanse of untamed country that captivated me, stretching to the hazy horizon of August.

It was something at my feet, an ode not to the forests or the mountains or the river for which this place is known, but a tribute to two people.

In a place distinguished by the absence of humanity, it was this small slab of granite, a wholly human gesture, that defined my first visit.

And it is, I suspect, what I will remember long after the details of Silver Butte's vista have dissipated.

I hope I can someday honor the memory of my parents in a manner as poignant as the three sons of Hugh S. McKenzie and Helen J. Raymond managed.

The memorial to the Pendleton couple lies atop one of the foundation piers for the fire lookout that

once stood on this 6,191-foot summit.

According to the engravings, it was laid here in 1998. The memorial honors Hugh and Helen, who were married in Pendleton in 1920. Hugh died in 1973, Helen in 1984.

Besides that biographical information the marker bears these inscriptions as a brief history of this region:

- "Gold Mining 1862-1954."
- "Fire Lookout 1935-1979."
- "NFJD Wilderness 1984."

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IF YOU GO....

If you're coming from the La Grande area, take Highway 244, the Ukiah-Hilgard Highway, to the Grande Ronde River Road, Forest Road 51. Follow the paved road through Starkey and to the junction with Road 52, the Blue Mountain Scenic Byway. From Baker City, drive through Sumpter and Granite, then continue north from Granite on Road 73, the Elkhorn Scenic Byway, to the North Fork John Day River. Continue north, now on Road 52. From the intersection of Roads 52 and 51, head west on Road 52 (it was chip sealed earlier this summer, so beware of loose gravel) for 15 miles to the junction with Road 5225, which heads south (left). Follow Road 5225, which is well-maintained gravel in places but rocky and rough closer to Silver Butte. The road runs about 9.5 miles, passing multiple trailheads, all of which lead into the North Fork John Day Wilderness, and several undeveloped campsites.



» A granite marker was placed on Silver Butte in 1998 as a memorial to a Pendleton couple, Hugh S. McKenzie and Helen J. Raymond.

Jayson Jacoby/Baker City Herald

» The memorial to Hugh S. McKenzie and Helen J. Raymond, on the summit of Silver Butte, has an expansive view of the North Fork John Day Wilderness.

Lisa Britton/Baker City Herald

Tackling the angler's dilemma: when to upgrade?

How a new tackle box can simplify your life

This article will be geared toward old timers with old school tackle boxes or newbies who want to get into fishing.

Benjamin Franklin is credited with saying: "Don't be the first to embrace the new nor the last to discard the old." The latter would be me. I'd still be using a flip phone if my dead battery hadn't been discontinued. And then my daughter gave me an iPhone. Now of course I love iPhones due to their awesome filming abilities. So it goes without saying, it's hard for me to upgrade gear unless it flat out breaks or wears out.

I remember decades ago, Cotton Ward wrote an article on replacing his old flyfishing vest. I forget all of the gory details but the gist of it was that it was tough to get rid of his old worn-out vest and replace it with a new one. He knew where everything was in it, plus it held a lot of memories.

So with the above said, I understand how we fishermen can get emotionally tied to our traditional gear. But come on, even Huckleberry Finn and Jim would have ditched their cane poles and evolved to using a modern rod and reel by now if they were still alive!

Today we're going to talk about upgrading your tackle box. When I was a kid the old flip top boxes



TOM CLAYCOMB
BASE CAMP

were the only option. Then the flat ones with little compartments that had a see through top emerged. They were nice because you could see where your lures were.

Then a few years ago canvas tackle boxes that held plastic trays became popular — and for good reason. You can compartmentalize your lures. Carry your jigs in one tray, plastics in another. Plugs in one and weights in another. This allows you to be more organized, which provides for faster access.

Another big advantage is that instead of needing 10 tackle boxes you have trays designated for crappie fishing, bass, yellow perch, walleye, catfish and whatever else you want to fish for. Let's say you're going crappie fishing this afternoon. All you have to do is to throw your crappie trays into your canvas tackle box and off you go. That's a lot better than years ago when you had to carry three or four on every trip to be covered.

My old tackle box is getting threadbare after many years of fishing so I've been in the market for a new box. I've been looking around for the last 2 years but



Tom Claycomb/Contributed Photo

The author didn't realize how many tackle boxes he had until he laid them all out. And this doesn't even include all of his flyfishing gear.

hadn't found what I wanted. A couple of weeks ago I found what would fit my needs. It is the Large Mouth Tackle Bag made by Evolution Outdoor. I got the 3600 which is what I'd classify as a smaller/medium sized bag. If you have a big boat, you may want a bigger bag but there's not a lot of extra room in the Black Pearl so the 3600 is the perfect size for me.

Also, I've been doing a deal over in South Dakota. I'm doing mainly bank fishing and wading there so I thought a backpack tackle box would work better there so I ordered an Evolution Outdoor Large Mouth Double Decker Backpack. It uses the same size trays as the Largemouth

Tackle Bag so I can interchange trays between both boxes.

As stated above, I got both bags but I also ordered nine extra trays. I can throw my specialty fishing gear in those trays and grab them if going on a walleye, crappie, bass or gar fishing trip. Or if I'm going crappie fishing and there's a chance I might want to catch a few bass, I can take along 1-2 of the bass plug trays, which won't take up much room.

So if you're one of the last to embrace the new, make the switch and grab a new style of tackle box like the Large Mouth Tackle box and get rid of your old grandpa-style flip top tackle boxes and be a pace setter.



Tom Claycomb/Contributed Photo

The ultimate tackle box is like this Evolution Outdoor LargeMouth Tackle Box.

When I started writing this article, I thought I'd have it done in 1 or 2 hours but then I spread all of my tackle boxes out in the front yard. Wow, I had way more than I thought. I had to set up a card table to work on so I could consolidate my lures into the trays. Gee, I had enough lures and jigs ratholed to last me until I'm 99 years old!

Suddenly a 1- to 2-hour article turned into a 6- to 8-hour project and I'm still not totally organized. I left my salmon gear in my old green tackle box but I am a lot more organized now. I have all crappie gear in trays in the new Large Mouth Tackle Box, my striped jigs/plugs in plastic trays which I can grab next time I fly to Texas for a striper fishing trip.

I may start a new career and become a tackle box organizing consultant! You can pay me for my services in cash or lures.