

The 1990s in Central Oregon

BY MAKENZIE WHITTLE

The Bulletin

In one Bulletin end of year column written by former publisher John Costa in 1998, he described the year before as “hard to remember a recent time when our political culture was so uncertain, or our security in the world so hard to gauge.” Reading that with 2020 freshly in the rearview mirror may give you a chuckle.

Though it certainly doesn't feel like it, the 1990s concluded two decades ago.

Defined through fashions of flannel and frosted tips, bubble gum pop and grunge music and the beginning of the information age, the '90s lept society into the new millennium with a hefty dose of optimism.

Here's a look back at some local news from that decade with some of the defining and sobering moments, new horizons and some interesting events that stood out.

Fires

The summer of 1990 in Bend saw one of the most devastating fires blaze right up to the city limits. On Aug. 4 the Awbrey Hall Fire ignited west of Bend near Shevlin Park scorching more than 3,350 acres in just 12 hours.

Though the amount of land burned is a fraction of what we saw last summer, the fire

destroyed 22 homes.

A similar story came six years later when the Skeleton Fire scorched 19 homes in the Sundance subdivision and more than 17,700 acres of juniper and ponderosa forest south-east of Bend. That year was the worst fire season the state had seen up until that point.

Now, it seems like every few years Oregon has a record fire season, but these two that hit the closest to home and stand out vividly in residents who lived through them.

Another fire story that hit close to home took place hundreds of miles away in Colorado. In 1994 the Prineville Hotshots traveled to Glenwood Springs to help with the fire fighting efforts on Storm King Mountain. But the fire progressed quickly and they were trapped by the flames. Fourteen firefighters died, including nine from the Prineville crew.

Mills

The '90s also saw the closure of the mills

that dotted Central Oregon. When the Brooks-Scanlon mill (at the time owned by Crown Pacific Ltd.) closed down in 1994, it marked the end of timber processing in the area. But no sooner had the saws quit buzzing, developer Bill Smith had a vision for the area to be revitalized into the Old Mill District we know today.

But at the time, many wondered if the town could sustain “two downtowns” as one 1999 Bulletin article stated.

Turns out it can.

Growth

Bend grew up in the '90s. The town transformed from the sleepy mill and mountain town to one of the top destinations and places to live by the mid-'90s.

Deschutes County was the fastest growing county in the state during the 1990s, a trend that has continued, with Bend taking the lead in population booms, starting with around 24,000 people and doubling by the end of the decade.

With all that growth, infrastructure and the county itself had to adapt for the influx of people. In 1991, U.S. Highway 97 between Bend and Redmond was widened to

four lanes — which at this point seems hard to imagine any other way now. In Bend, new plans were laid with the building of the Bend Parkway in 1997, a new downtown library was built and the Deschutes Public Library District was formed in 1999, which expanded access and unified the libraries throughout the county, as well as the creation of a whole new fairground and expo center in Redmond (1999).

From the depths of the archives

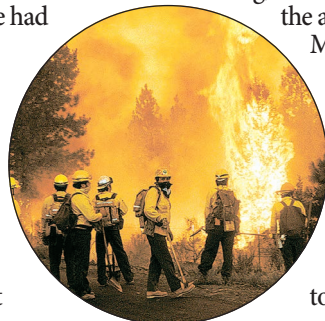
Of course, no look back would be complete without some of the more ... unusual stories that garnered at least an article in The Bulletin.

In one truly “only in the '90s” story from 1994, angry Star Trek fans flooded the phone lines to a local TV station, The Bulletin as well as Bend Cable (now BendBroadband) when the first hour of the series finale of “Star Trek: The Next Generation” was blacked out.

The two-hour episode “All Good Things” was originally broadcast on May 23, but the Eugene station KEZI, which the show aired on, delayed it a week to May 28.

Eventually, local Trekkies got to see the episode in its entirety two weeks after its original broadcast date.

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Bulletin file photo

The Awbrey Hall Fire roared past Skyliners Road shortly before sunset Aug. 4, 1990.

The test of time: How well do you know the '90s?

BY DAVID JASPER

The Bulletin

Even by today's standards, the 1990s were an eventful decade, with plenty of scandals, early iterations of reality TV, forbidden dances and more. But considering 1999 was 21 years ago, it's been a while. How well do you remember the details? Take our quiz and find out!

1. What was the name of Ross's pet capuchin monkey, which appeared in eight episodes of “Friends”?

- A. Chandler
- B. Morgan
- C. Marcel
- D. Paulo

2. The first season of MTV's “The Real World” aired in 1992. In which of the below cities was it set?

- A. San Francisco
- B. New York
- C. Los Angeles
- D. Miami

3. When it came to the physical movements of the titular character in 1999's “Tarzan,” the animators took inspiration from the movements of what great athlete?

- A. A-Rod
- B. Michael Jordan
- C. Kelly Slater
- D. Tony Hawk

4. Before she went solo and became known as a judge on “The Voice” and the fiancée of Blake Shelton, Gwen Stefani was the lead singer of what 1990s band?

5. What 1990s film spawned the bestselling soundtrack of all time?

- A. “Home Alone”
 - B. “The Bodyguard”
 - C. “Armageddon”
 - D. “There's Something about Mary”
6. With which fellow Britpop band did Oasis have a well-known rivalry?

- A. Suede
- B. Pulp
- C. Elastica
- D. Blur

7. What was the name of country great Garth Brooks' rock 'n' roll alter-ego?

- A. Chris Gaines
- B. Chris Gentry
- C. Sam Rockwell
- D. Paul Ramon

8. In what year did ESPN hold its inaugural X-Games?

- A. 1991
- B. 1994

9. What dance form is referred to in the title of 1990's “The Forbidden Dance”?

- A. Lambda Lambda Lambda
- B. The Urkel
- C. The Lambada
- D. The Carlton

10. Who drove the infamous white Ford Bronco during law enforcement's low-speed pursuit of O.J. Simpson in June 1994?

- A. Al Cowlings
- B. Kato Kaelin
- C. Robert Kardashian
- D. Mark Fuhrman

If you answered nine or all correctly, congratulations, you're a '90s maven! If you answered six to eight correctly, we'll call it passing. If you answered five or fewer correctly, it's time to go back to school like Billy Madison.

ANSWERS:

- 1) c, 2) b, 3) d, 4) a, 5) b, 6) d, 7) a, 8) c, 9) c, 10) a

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