

ROAD TRIP 395

A CHALLENGING JOURNEY

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We all need to be challenged in order to grow. Whether it be a professional endeavor or a passion project, it is by challenging ourselves that we are truly able to test our mettle and become stronger.

In my photography, I go through many peaks and valleys of growth. Sometimes I feel as if I'm in these never-ending periods of stagnation where I cannot honestly tell whether I'm getting any better at my craft, no matter how hard I try to improve.

Then there are the times it seems that every image coming out of my camera is golden and creating those images seems effortless. That is my artistic journey: a bipolar roller coaster ride of chasing the elusive highs and dreading the impending lows.

It is not easy on the soul. The one constant through all



Mile 209.4 - A bullet-riddled road sign in Seneca on Highway 395.

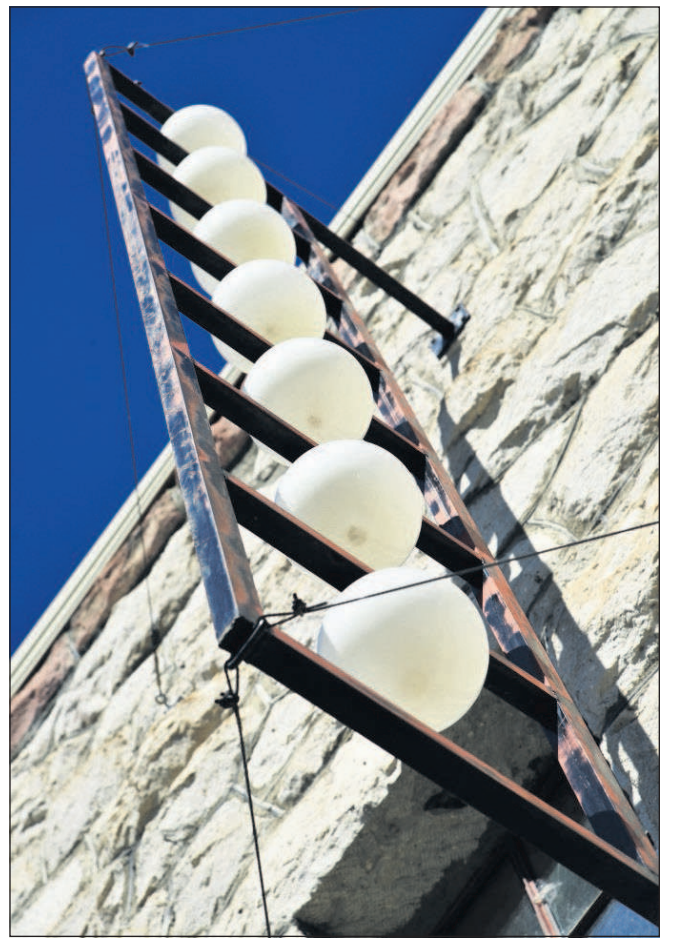
of it, though, is that I always keep moving. Never afraid to take a bad photo, and I have more than a few of those.

So I recently talked my editors into doing a project

— a challenge if you will — where on the summer solstice I would drive the whole length of Highway 395, from the California border to Umatilla, documenting my journey along the way. The only rules were that I couldn't stray too far from the highway, and to get to Umatilla by sunset. Secretly though, I just thought it

would be a great way to get my bosses to fund a road trip. But the moment I was given the go-ahead, the challenge began.

The first part of the challenge came in the form of the enthusiasm my bosses had for the idea. "That's great, let's take your idea and make it bigger." It went from a simple lifestyle to a



Mile 238.2 - A light fixture on the outside of the Community Hall in Canyon City on Highway 395.

four-page spread on high-bright paper. And it needs a graphic element, of course. Multi-media too. What had started as a beautiful snowflake began to feel like it morphed into an avalanche and I was directly in its path.

challenge seemed to come from the crippling anxiety that afflicted my mind for the month leading up to the road trip. In my sleep I would have apocalyptic nightmares.

The second part of the

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