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—Ronald Reagan

Cover Photo taken by Musher April Cox - her own
view of her amazing sled dog team.

JEFFERSON BACKROADS is proudly published for the Hard Working, Old School & Patriotic Rebels who live in or travel through our Rugged & Beautiful State of Jefferson. We focus on the positive, the fun, the amazing local businesses, the history and THE ADVENTURE!!

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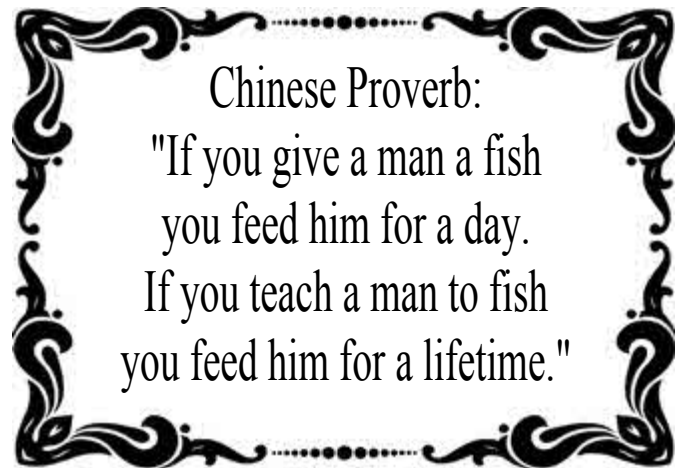


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Melissa Disney is Coming to Scott Valley

By Serena Travis



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Northern California and Southern Oregon residents will have a rare opportunity coming Saturday, January 30th in Fort Jones. Melissa Disney, 4th cousin to Walt, will be teaching an exclusive voice-over workshop from 9AM-12PM at The REC which is next to the Chevron station. *(See AD on the bottom of Page 11 for all the details.)* Disney's world-class talent has been heard around the world on The Oscars, The Emmys, and other live award shows, and several other voice-over venues.


Cartoon lovers will be delighted to realize that Melissa Disney voiced the main character, Ginger Foutley, on the popular kids' show, "As Told by Ginger." However, Melissa's voice-over talent doesn't stop at live award shows or animation. She was the first woman to voice movie trailers which was once thought to be a male-dominated niche. Many are familiar with the "In a world," phrase made popular by Don LaFontaine, the "Voice of God." Now deceased, Don encouraged Disney by saying, "Melissa, you're an incredible actress and there's just no reason why you shouldn't be doing movie trailers." Melissa has since voiced dozens of movie trailers including the famous "Gone in 60 Seconds," with Nicholas Cage and Angelina Jolie.

She sings, she acts, and she loves kids too. Recently, Melissa was the named the recipient of the 2015 Motif Awards (Lifetime Legacy Honor) in memoriam of Walt Disney. Melissa was honored for her work with ARM (Africa Renewal Ministries) an incredible child sponsorship program for the poorest children of Uganda. The event was fittingly held at the Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles.

Historian Gail Fiorini Jenner discovered a Disney connection to Scott Valley, California while researching through documents. Lillian Bounds, Walt Disney's wife, had lived in Fort Jones as a child. She was a relative of the Short family. Don't bother checking on Wikipedia though: Lillian referred to Lapwai, Idaho (the Nez Perce Indian Reservation) as her childhood home. However, Lillian's name is on a postcard dated 1900 and her name is on the 1984 Fort Jones Homecoming Roster as an alumna: Lillian Bounds Disney, Burbank, CA. Marie Piscantor Jenner had Lillian Bounds as a student in school. Pinky Matthews of Fort Jones, twelve years younger than Lillian, remembered Lillian's reddish hair and recalls that she was well-liked. And she was "poor as a mouse!" Speaking of The Mouse, Micky would have been called "Mortimer" if Lillian hadn't nudged-winked Walt into choosing a more suitable moniker. The Disneys would occasionally visit Scott Valley to visit friends and family and retreat to their mountain cabin.

And so we have come full circle and invite you to participate in this exclusive voiceover workshop sponsored by Serena Travis, LA Voiceover Academy, and the Scott Valley Film Coalition. No prior acting experience is required. First-timers are encouraged to give it a go! ♦

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Photo of Melissa Disney announcing an awards show was submitted by Serena Travis.

See AD on bottom of Page 11 for all details.



History of Lillian Bounds - Mrs. Walt Disney

By Gail Jenner

One of the most intriguing stories of the early 1920s is that of Lillian Bounds. She is most noted for being "Mrs. Walt Disney," after marrying him in 1925. Born in 1898, she died in 1997.

Interestingly, though her biographies say she was born and raised in Idaho, she did live, at least for a time, in or near Fort Jones. She is a descendant of Frank Hooper, of Hooperville, and her mother was Jeanette Short, who died when Lillian was young. Her father, William Pehall Bounds, coincidentally was a traveling preacher who worked with the Indians of Idaho.

'Pinky' Bill Mathews, aged 92, of Etna, remembers Lillian. "She was a few years older than me but we both had reddish hair. Everyone liked her."

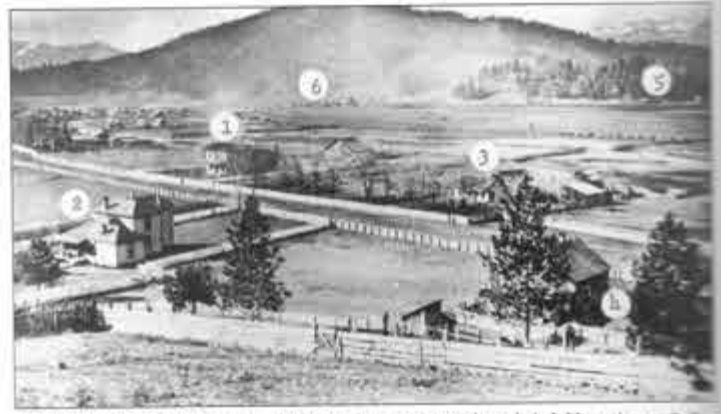
Marie Piscantor, now deceased, often stated she'd had Lillian as one of her pupils. Marie taught at McAdams Creek School, but no class list or photos of Lillian in school could be located.

Richard Luttrell, Fort Jones historian and a descendent of both the Hoopers and Shorts, recalls, "Of course, Lillian Bounds was Mrs. Walt Disney. She lived in Fort Jones for a time and her sister is buried in the Fort Jones Cemetery." Scanning the Fort Jones' Cemetery records, there are two Bounds graves listed, one identified as Delia, the other unnamed.

Jan Baker, of Fort Jones, recalls how her aunt (by marriage), Florence Baker (now deceased), also spoke of and had correspondence with Lillian until recent years.

When we asked Katie Bertleson, aged 99, of Etna, if she had ever heard of Lillian Bounds, her daughter asked, "Why does that name sound so familiar?" Katie replied, "Of course I knew her. She was Mrs. Walt Disney."

The Cramer family of Moffett Creek also recalls that Walt Disney's nephew occasionally came to hunt deer on the Cramer ranch. The roster of names for the Fort Jones Homecoming mailing list of 1984 lists Lillian Bounds Disney and her address in Burbank, California. Whatever her story, Mrs. Lillian Bounds Disney definitely has ties to the history of Hooperville and Fort Jones. ♦



Map of Fort Jones Homes from 1900:

1. J. Young House
2. Dr. Cowan House
3. Early home of Lillian Bounds, Mrs. Walt Disney
4. Lee Hodgkins House
5. Slaughter House
6. Davidson Farm

Courtesy Betty Hall - Irene Nelson Collection

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HISTORY OF YREKA

by Claudia A. East

Join us each month for Claudia East's fascinating historical stories of the town of Yreka, California. Feel free to read & follow Claudia on her blog at: <http://yrekahistory.blogspot.com>.

"Con Brown's"

Below is an updated article that originally appeared in the January 1977 edition of the Yreka Echoes Newsletter. The basic article was originally written by Harland McDonald. Copyright by Yreka (Historic) Preservation. Reprinted by permission.

Just plain Con Brown's ~ no additional description is necessary for those individuals who enjoyed the privilege of knowing Con Brown and his establishment.

From 1947 to 1971 it occupied the space at 219 West Miner Street which presently houses Lalo's Mexican Restaurant. For several years prior to 1947, Con operated a billiard parlor next door on the west where a hair salon currently operates. Today one can view one of the later Con Brown signs on the wall in this salon. At the beginning of World War II a number of pool tables went to the Japanese Relocation Center near Tulelake, and Con purchased the building space to the east. In his earlier years Con was a bank employee in Yreka, and he had served in World War I.

As far as business was concerned, Con Brown's was a tobacco store, a magazine and newspaper dispensary, a card room, and a bar serving beer and soft drinks. The entire back section of the room contained card tables and chairs which were occupied throughout each day by Con's friends and retired gentlemen of the community. Some played cards which others just came to watch and enjoy the companionship. This was a haven, a place to relax and spin tall tales of yesteryears.

At the bar, after serving a beer, it was never difficult to induce Con to recall and recite an interesting incident of earlier Siskiyou history. Old photos were available behind the bar to back up the stories.

Several incidents come to mind as we reminisce. It was a warm summer day and the front doors were open wide. Across the street on the Siskiyou Bank Building several pigeons sat resting. Con went behind the counter and came out with a small portion of chicken feed and proceeded to lay out a trail from the front step into the room as far as the bar. Down flew one of the birds which proceeded to grain along the floor completely ignoring his benefactor, Con, and interested customers.

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There were lively arguments, resulting in some bets as we remember, concerning the outcome of future games. This center of interest held away from the season beginning in April and May until the climax with the World Series in early October.

Con's store was far from elegant. The wood floor was rustic and worn. The walls, for the most part, were undecorated and bare, but there was a feeling of warmth and homey-ness for those who came to spend the greatest part of each day.

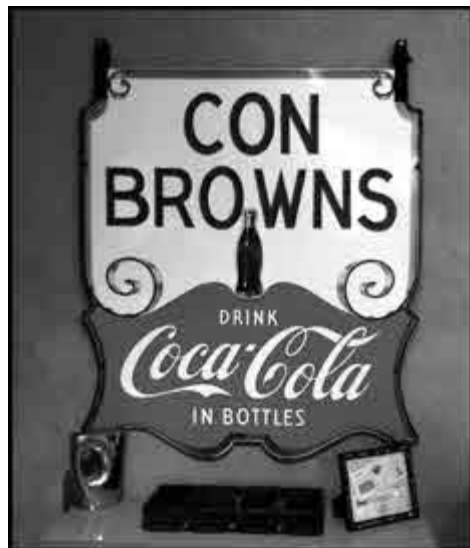
Yes, Con Brown was, as was once said in the logging camps, a 'Gentleman and a Scholar.' He and his place of business was a social institution which was sorely missed when Con passed on. ♦




Photo above:
Con Brown's location in Yreka in 1953.

Photo below:
A later Con Brown's sign on wall in hair salon located along the 200 block of West Miner Street, Yreka.

Submitted by Claudia East of Yreka Preservation.





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Check out the Calendar of Events on Page 16
for a few additional quilting workshops & events!

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STITCHING IN THE DITCH

By Judy Sartor of
Mount Shasta Lily Quilt Guild

To state the obvious: it is now January of 2016. Wow! And have you seen Mt. Shasta? It finally has snow! It's not nearly enough, of course, but at least the mountain is white!

And with a blanket of snow come quilts and a new year of quilt shows. So what can quilters, fiber artists, and the aficionados of both anticipate?

Scott Valley Quilt Show, May 21, 2016 - Besides a gorgeous array of quilts, the ladies of the Scott Valley Quilters Guild will display their challenge quilts and offer boutique items and a basket raffle. And have you seen their raffle quilt in delicious purples and blues? See photo below right. It features a hand-appliquéd bouquet and vase surrounded by a bevy of blocks. Admission to the quilt show is \$3. Lots of fun happens over in Scott Valley! For further information contact Michelle Estrada theetnamom@gmail.com

The middle of the summer brings the Siskiyou County Fiber Arts Show, slated for the end of June and most of July. This show is sponsored by Weston's Quilting and Crafts and features all things fiber. Entries display natural and synthetic fiber and other components, such as fabric or yarn, and may even range from wire to dryer lint. This year's show will be held at Snow Creek Studios. For more information, call Weston's at 926-4021.

Quilting Around the Mountain, September 3 & 4, 2016. This is Labor Day weekend, and the Shasta Lily

Quilt Guild anticipates another beautiful display of quilts ranging from traditional to modern. New this year is the option of having your quilts judged by professional quilter and judge Jill Schumacher. This is only an option. I'll discuss the advantages of having your work critiqued in a later article. Our featured quilter this year is Don Linn, affectionately known as Mr. Quilt. His works are dynamic and powerful, and his workshops are in high demand. We will also have a boutique, vendors and opportunity baskets. Our Opportunity Quilt (photo above) is a hand-appliquéd wonder featuring varied views of Mt. Shasta through the seasons. For further information about the show contact Barbara Hegdal barbara_hegdal@att.net. Our website is shastalily.org. ✂

Shasta Lily Quilt Guild

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Upcoming Events

January 7, 2016 at 7:30 p.m.
Pacific Crest Chamber Players in concert at
Preservation Hall.

January 14, 2016 at 7:30 p.m.
Violin-Piano Duo Concert Patrick Dalton-Holmes & Chiharu
Sai. Preservation Hall.

January 31, 2016 at 2:00 p.m.
Red Scarf presents an Opera Concert Preservation Hall.

A FEW UPCOMING EVENTS & CLASSES

Sue Spargo Workshop

January 28th – 31st 2016

Sue will be teaching her wonderful wool appliqué embellishing techniques at Tater Patch Quilts in Merrill, Oregon. There will be two – two day classes: “Leaves & Circles” – this workshop provides ample opportunity for learning.

Call (541) 798- 5955 to sign up and for all the details.

See Tater Patch AD and more quilting fun on Pages 14-15.

Siskiyou Sportsmens Expo

March 12-13, 2016

Siskiyou Golden Fairgrounds, Yreka, California
(530) 842-2767 for all the great information!!

Spring Quilting Retreat 2016

April 15th, 16th and 17th

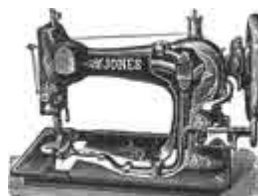
Running Y Resort, Klamath Falls, Oregon

An opportunity for you to do a little "Spring Cleaning" and finish up a project or two. Call Tater Patch Quilts at (541) 798-5955. See their AD and other quilting info on Pages 14-15.

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Always contact our Chambers of Commerce for ALL the upcoming local events!!



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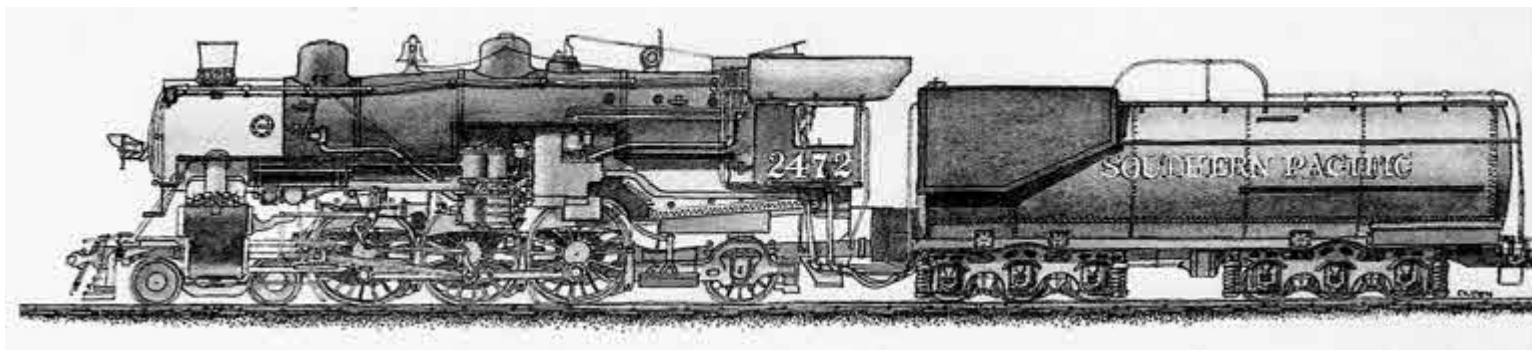
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DUNSMUIR RAILROAD DEPOT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

LOOKING BACK ON 2015 AT THE DUNSMUIR MUSEUM

The Dunsmuir Railroad Depot Historical Society's Dunsmuir Museum has closed for the winter months after another event-filled year. The Museum will reopen April 2016. Visit us at www.dunsmuirdepot.com for the latest.

Last year, the Dunsmuir Museum reopened in April with bunting on the Dunsmuir Depot. In May our 7th Annual Pie Social during Dogwood Daze saw 85 pie makers donating 48 different pies totaling 175 pies; we were sold out by 1:30 pm. Thanks again to the pie makers and the Pie Social crew!

During the June RAILROAD DAYS we sponsored the Amtrak Exhibit Train on Saturday for the National Amtrak Train Day. Their crew reported 1201 people toured their train; we had over 500 people visit the Museum. We had two Road Scholar groups in June and July visit the Museum (children and their grandparents from around the country).

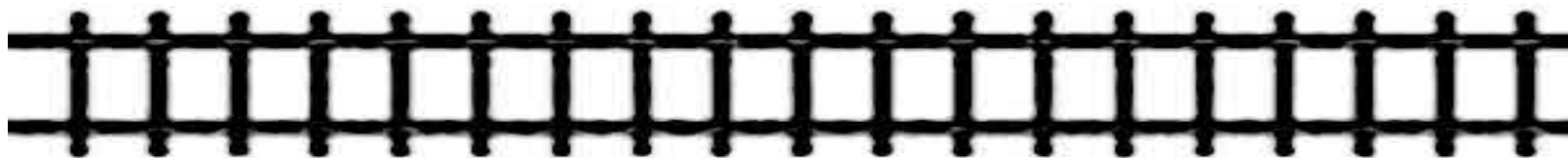
Our July Depot Society Ticket Drawing had all Dunsmuir winners. Myrna Dupyzk won 'ENJOY DUNSMUIR,' Dave Fischer won the Norman Rockwell Fishing Quilt; Sue Alameda won the Gypsy Rose Quilt. Thanks to all who participated in our drawing. In October the Museum was open for the town's Art Walk; the Museum closed the 18th for the winter months.

The Depot building roof was repaired; the Amtrak Depot waiting room was cleaned twice weekly last year. Volunteers of the Shasta Archives continue to catalog photographic images and scanning many of them. They have located where most were taken and have sleeved, numbered, filed and indexed into an excel spread sheet all the scans plus 51 drawings of stations, mostly Dunsmuir Roundhouse. They have begun to sort and index smaller roll drawings, work orders, etc.

Your Depot Society membership continues the maintenance of the Dunsmuir Depot (the only Amtrak Siskiyou County stop) and the Dunsmuir Museum. Your \$10 Museum membership check and \$10 Depot membership check may be sent to the Depot Society, P O Box 324, Dunsmuir CA 96025. All donations are welcome. See you at the Dunsmuir Museum this year!

2016 Events – Mark your Calendar

April - Museum reopens
May 28th - 8th Annual Pie Social
June - RAILROAD DAYS
July 16th – Depot Ticket Drawing



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Story by April Cox - See photos at right.

Almost five years ago, I decided to make positive change in my life, to the betterment of myself and my dogs. I moved my son, 30+dogs and 2 horses up here to the small town of Adin, California to live on my friend Hugo's 40 acres, to train and race with him. He has 20 dogs of his own. The first year, training was restricted as we only knew of a couple of main trails. Often we would go out on a training run, make note of a side trail, and go back out on just the quads to see where they went. Soon we had a mecca of alternate routes and extended mileages. Training out here in the Modoc National Forest is always an adventure. I can leave the property with a team of dogs hooked to my quad and go out into the forest to train. This is awesome in that it eliminates having to load dogs into the truck, and driving to trails. What a time and gas saver! The awesome micro-climate we have here makes great training weather. It is often cold enough to start as early as the first part of September. There have even been nights and evenings mid-summer that I could run dogs. As a general rule, I don't run my dogs if it is above 50F. Sled dogs can overheat if worked in warm temps. I train my dogs for races ranging in distance from 10-100 miles. This means at times I am out doing 20-30 mile runs with the quad during fall, hoping for early snow so that the snowmobile trails will be accessible to get out and use with the dog sled. Sadly the last few winters have been bad ones. Bad for me means no snow.

There are generally a few races here in California, but two of them are up in the GREAT STATE of JEFFERSON area. Weed (Siskiyou Sled Dog Races) and Chester (Sierra Nevada Dog Drivers Winterfest) are my favorites. Other races I go to are in Oregon and Montana. Training and racing is quite expensive for gas, equipment, dog food, etc., so that means I have to work as well. I found a job at a cool general store in Bieber called The Red Barn. I love working there. What a traveler's oasis! Plus it is great for the locals with just about anything you need!

If you want to help me out with donations or just want to learn more about Dog Sledding, you can reach me at badasmusher@yahoo.com or look me up on Facebook at www.facebook.com/badasmusher —

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Photos: Above - April's team in West Yellowstone in December 2015 taken by April. Below - April with a couple of her sweet huskies, taken by reporter Leslie Mielke of the Blackfoot Morning News. Cover photo is also April's team, taken by April.



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History of The Mount Shasta Region

Stories by Jean Nels of the
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"The Brakeman"

The brakeman on a train was the one who operated or repaired the brakes. In the early days, he was the lowest paid crewman. A brakeman assisted the braking of a train by applying brakes on individual cars. This meant the brakeman had to walk on top of a moving train to set the brakes. He had to work in the rain, snow and sleet. Imagine what that was like!

To apply or release the brakes the brakeman would turn a large brake wheel located atop each freight car. Every brakeman carried a thick brake club to help give him leverage in turning the brake wheel.

Sometimes a brakeman's job included jumping on or off moving trains. He had to run ahead of the engine, throw a switch, and stand there until the train had passed.

If he was a rear brakeman, he had to go back some distance behind the train and flag a following train. The brakeman would also couple and uncouple cars. In the days of link and pin, coupling and uncoupling cars was a dangerous job. The brakeman had to stand between two cars to attach or detach them. He risked being crushed or maimed while performing this operation. If you saw a train worker with missing fingers or limbs, many times it was because he was a brakeman.

This excerpt from the North Star Newspaper tells of a serious accident that happened to a brakeman on December 10, 1887:

"On Friday noon, as a train was loading ties and lumber at the Red Cross mill, an accident occurred, caused by some cars a short distance above running down the track and colliding with the flat cars upon which the lumber was being loaded. The brakeman jumped on top of the pile as the collision occurred, and was thrown in such a manner as to catch his leg between the lumber. When the pile was thrown off the car, and the man released from his perilous position, it was found that his leg was badly fractured. The name of the unfortunate man was Tom Hughes. He was taken immediately to Sisson (now Mt. Shasta City), where his broken limb will be properly set, and it is hoped amputation will not be necessary." ♦



A wreck on the McCloud River Railroad that involved a logging flat car. (Photo and sketch courtesy of Siskiyou County Museum)



A brakeman's job was dangerous and involved running atop the train cars in many kinds of weather to set the brakes.



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** See Page 2 for map of The State of Jefferson to locate the Counties.



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Having been asked to share something of my "own" story, I am taking this opportunity to share a little about my journey as a writer.

Linking writing and history was a natural step for me. As a youngster, I was always writing, whether it was poetry, journaling, letters, and even a play! In fourth grade, my twin sister and I wrote a play, "The Princess Who Couldn't Spin!" Not only did we write the play, we auditioned it in front of our school's teachers and they approved our putting it on for the ENTIRE elementary school. In fact, our play was the first event scheduled to be performed on the school's brand new stage. What a thrill. We gathered the "actors" and our mother helped with the costuming and co-directing. My twin sister got to be the star --- the beautiful princess. Apparently it was a success -- or so declared all the teachers and our parents!

I was also an avid reader -- something I believe every writer needs to be -- and in fifth grade alone, I managed to read almost every biography in our school's library. Again, a good teacher encouraged me in finding stories that would challenge me. In addition, my maternal grandmother was a wonderful historian and both of my parents were readers and lovers of history, so both writing and history soon became passions of mine.

Throughout school, I continued to write, but didn't necessarily share it with others -- aside from family or teachers. It wasn't until I began teaching, years later, that I even considered writing for publication. My degree had been in Anthropology, with minors in English and Social Studies, so I taught both history and English, which I loved. When I received a fellowship to attend the Northern California Bay Area Writing Project, I spent six weeks writing and critiquing and being critiqued. I became a consultant for our county and shared with other teachers how to incorporate writing "across the

curriculum." However, on a personal level, that summer re-awakend the desire to write for an audience. I quietly submitted a few articles to various magazines and unbelievably, sold them. I sought out different kinds of publications, especially those that seemed open to new writers. I also began to submit to writing contests, and placed as a finalist in several. With each success, I grew more confident and eager to learn as much about writing as I could. I joined a local writers' group and found courses and/or conferences for writers. I realized that if I wanted to become a professional writer, I had to invest in my own "education." Unfortunately, a lot of beginning writers resist spending money on books or classes, or conferences, thinking it to be an expense they can't afford. Nothing could be further from the truth.

In the meantime, I also began collecting family stories -- hoping to preserve them for our children. As the wife of a fourth generation cattle rancher, it was as if we were "living" the family history almost on a daily basis. Still, it felt like many of the family's great stories were slowly disappearing. It soon became my personal mission to gather up as many of the old-time stories and random bits of local history as I could, and it wasn't long before I discovered that others shared my passion for writing and history.



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This seemed to lead me naturally into writing history for publication. During this time, I started work on what would become my first novel, a 100,000-word romantic historical set in Montana in 1870, against the backdrop of the infamous -- but little known -- Marias/Blackfoot massacre. The history behind this horrific event captured my imagination and after many many rewrites and more than seven years, I sold the novel, *ACROSS THE SWEET GRASS HILLS*, to a small publisher.

I probably owe my greatest debt of gratitude to the wonderful national writing organization, "Women Writing the West." I found out about WWW while seeking potential markets and contests. At my very first conference, I not only met publishers and editors, I also learned of the group's WILLA Literary Awards. I then submitted my newly-published novel and was stunned when *ACROSS THE SWEET GRASS HILLS* won the 2002 WILLA Literary Award for Best Softcover Historical Fiction. The fact that the final selections in each category are judged by librarians made winning the WILLA even more satisfying to me.

Also through WWW, I found Arcadia Publishing and, joining with friend and fellow writer, Monica Hall, we submitted *WESTERN SISKIYOU COUNTY: GOLD & DREAMS*, which was first published in 2002 and re-released in 2005. Next, I partnered with Bernita Tickner, another local writer and wonderful historian, and we sold 3 titles to Arcadia: *IMAGES OF THE STATE OF JEFFERSON*; *THE STATE OF JEFFERSON: THEN & NOW*; and *POSTCARDS FROM THE STATE OF JEFFERSON*. All three titles were some of Arcadia's best-selling titles in California/Oregon.

Again, through WWW, I met another publisher who was interested in *The State of Jefferson*. That led to the book *HISTORIC INNS & EATERIES IN THE STATE OF JEFFERSON*, which features 30 historical locations throughout Northern California and Southern Oregon, including a chapter of recipes from those locations, making it a fun travel guide, photo history, and cookbook -- all rolled into one. It continues to sell well regionally.

Interestingly, the *State of Jefferson* titles propelled me into appearances on several TV documentaries, including PBS's award-winning production on the *State of Jefferson* on "Oregon Experience" last year. I also appeared on "Mysteries at the Museum" and "How the States Got Their Shapes."

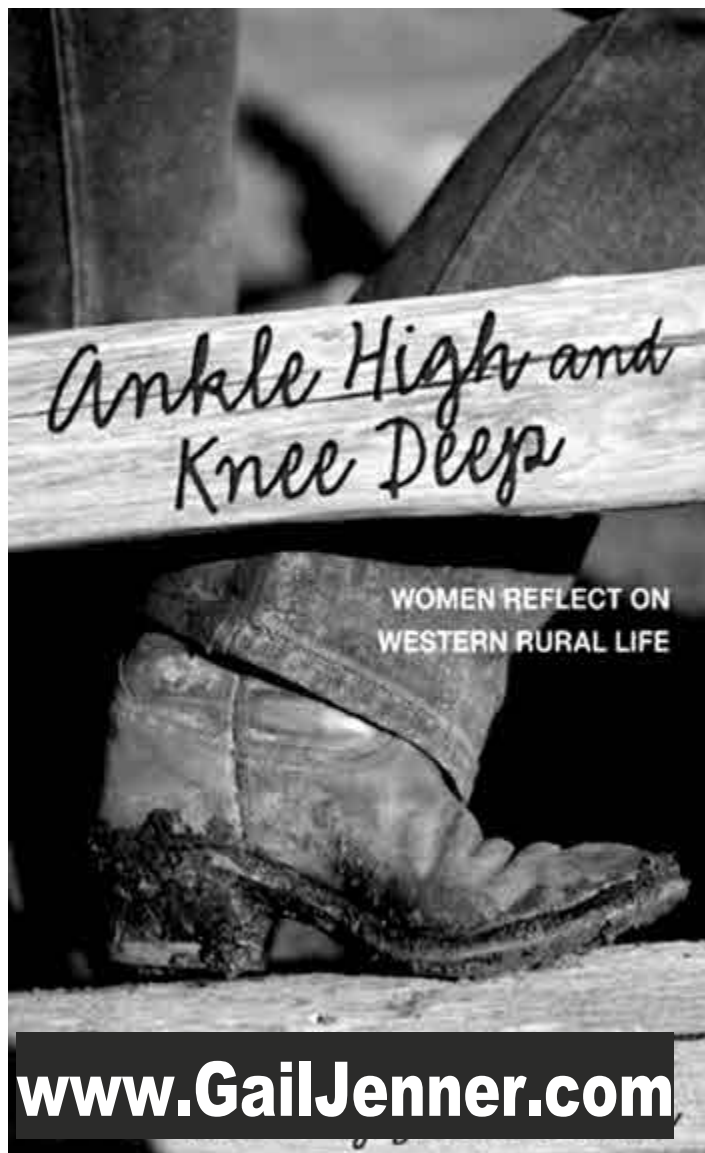
Because I love biography, in 2008 I partnered with another historian, Lou Legerton, to write the first fictionalized biography of *BLACK BART: THE POET BANDIT* -- the story of California's most successful stage bandit, also known as a gentleman bandit, who only targeted Wells Fargo. This book actually opened the door to an appearance on Fox Channel's "Legends and Lies," produced and narrated by Bill O'Reilly. Unbelievably I was flown to Montana for 3 days for the interview!

Another book that grew out of my love of country living was *ANKLE HIGH AND KNEE DEEP*, a collection of 40 women's "stories" about living in rural America -- and the foibles and challenges that come with country life -- published by Globe Pequot/Two Dot. In its first month of release in June 2014, it reached #10 on amazon's Top 100 books on Country Living. In addition, I've returned to writing more fiction; Prairie Rose Publishing re-released *ACROSS THE SWEET GRASS HILLS* as an Ebook in 2013, and I sold a novella, *JULY'S BRIDE*, in 2015, to Prairie Rose, in addition to three short western stories.



My latest project has been to complete a history of California's Redwood National and State Parks for Lyons Press. *HISTORIC REDWOOD NATIONAL AND STATE PARKS* will be released in May 2016 in honor of the 100-year anniversary of the National Park Service (NPS). It was a challenging project -- but a very satisfying one, too.

Even as I continue to look for new publishing opportunities, I love writing for JEFFERSON BACKROADS as well as for Jefferson Public Radio's "As It Was" historical series. Both of these "assignments" help me to find the fascinating and often overlooked local stories that are such an important part of our regional Jeffersonian "identity!" I doubt we will ever run out of stories to share! ♦





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"On the Road to . . ."

by Bob Pasero

Bob Pasero is Orland's retired Police Chief. Orland is in Glenn County which is at the southern end of The State of Jefferson! Bob writes for the Sacramento Valley Mirror and we will be re-printing some of his fascinating articles from his column: "On the Road - Adventures in the State of Jefferson."

Bob is also the National Chaplain for an organization called The Missing in America Project, a Veteran Recovery Program. Please go to www.miap.us for more info.

"MEETING HISTORY FACE TO FACE"

In these pages I tell of one of our hidden treasures here in the state of Jefferson; places to visit to enjoy the beauty fun and excitement in our little slice of heaven. Today is different. As you know I am active in a number of Veterans' service organizations. I am the Veteran's Recovery Officer for Glenn County, I am active in the Missing in America Project and I helped start, "ORLAND PRIDE" a nonprofit public benefit corporation to raise funds to build a permanent memorial to the sixty eight Orland patriots who have given their lives during a time of war or conflict since Orland incorporated in 1909.

Each of us in some fashion has had the opportunity to meet history face to face. Working with the various Veterans' groups has given me a number of such opportunities. One of the most pleasant of these experiences was recently meeting and interviewing Mr. Marc Piazza. Mr. Piazza is a lifelong Orland resident and a graduate of Orland High School where he was a stand out on the football team. He has the uncommon claim that he is a Veteran of The US Army Air Corp, US Army Air Force and the US Air Force having served during the Cold War with the Soviet Bloc nations. He served this Nation honorably and with distinction. I also had the great pleasure of meeting his lovely bride of 65 years, Virginia, as well as their children. Although separated by many miles and many states this family represents the quintessential "American Family" and they represent our town well as goodwill ambassadors at large for Orland.

On hearing of the Honor Walk that will lead up to and encircle the memorial to Orland's Patriots, the Piazza children, justifiably proud of their father's service to this nation, purchased a brick in Mr. Piazza's name for that walk of honor. I was fortunate to represent Orland Pride by hand delivering a framed photograph of the brick as well as bringing the engraved brick itself to allow Mr. Piazza and his family the opportunity to see the finished product.

The familial pride was palpable as Mr. Piazza described his military service. I found Mr. Piazza to have a ready smile with perhaps just a twinkle of mischief in his eyes as he discussed in detail his 4 years with the US Army Air Corp as it transitioned to the US Army Air Force and finally to the US Air Force during his time of service. Mr. Piazza was one of the Air Force's first generation of jet aircraft mechanics immediately following the Second World War at a time when relations were, shall we say, "strained" between the USSR and the United States. It was his responsibility to maintain those aircraft in top condition to be America's front line defense in case of a Soviet attack on our nation. This was in the days prior to the nation wide satellite umbrella coverage and radar protection provided by NORAD. Alaska was America's first, best and realistically our only line of defense from a Soviet attack from across the Bering Strait.



Mr. Piazza received his training at the Air Force's Jet Mechanic School in Chinook, Illinois. One day just prior to the US ARMY Air Force's birthday he and 19,999 others from the base; some in full uniform and some in uniform trousers and wearing white T shirts, were marched out to a staging area at Chinook. There they took their positions as ordered while a photographer from Life Magazine braved a very tall "cherry picker" to take an aerial photo of the assemblage. From the ground it was not obvious. However, from the high vantage point it could easily be seen that the men had formed the US Army Air Force emblem 20,000 strong. That photograph appeared in the September 1947 issue of Life Magazine and is displayed proudly to this day at Lackland Air Force Museum in Texas. It was one of the last of such photos of the "US Army Air Force." Shortly afterward the service was re-designated as the "United States Air Force."

Between 1948 and 1950 Mr. Piazza was stationed at Elmendorf Air Force Base in Alaska. He recalled one occasion with great clarity. His fighter squadron was "scrambled" to intercept in bound Russian fighter bombers that had penetrated American air space. This was not a drill it was the "real deal." Russian planes of war were perilously close. The fighter jockeys and their aircraft from Elmendorf performed well and sent the offending Russian aircraft "high tailing" it back to the safety of Mother Russia. The scrambled aircraft performed flawlessly during this terribly tense time, thanks to the efforts of Mr. Piazza and the other jet aircraft technicians. That is just one of many such incidents that occurred during the Cold War that most of us never heard of or knew about. The unsung heroes of the time secured our air space and our Nation and made us safe even when we didn't realize there was a problem.

On one occasion Mr. Piazza was assigned to KP duty when he got to meet history face to face. He and his crew were told to set a "special table" with all the finest that was to be had for a visiting dignitary. They did so and were greatly surprised and honored to meet and be able to serve the "Lone Eagle:" Charles "Lucky Lindy" Lindbergh. Mr. Piazza leaned forward and, in a conspiratorial tone told me, "all of us took a little souvenir off of that table...I have the knife that Lindbergh used for dinner that night. It's around here somewhere." Then He smiled and sat back in his recliner.

We all have our opportunity to meet history face to face. Mr. Piazza had his that day in Alaska meeting an American Legend Charles Lindbergh. I had mine just a few days before Thanksgiving meeting this unsung American hero, Mr. Mark Piazza, on this Adventure along the Backroads in the State of Jefferson. ♦



Photos of our Hero Marc Piazza and his amazing Brick, submitted by Bob Pasero.



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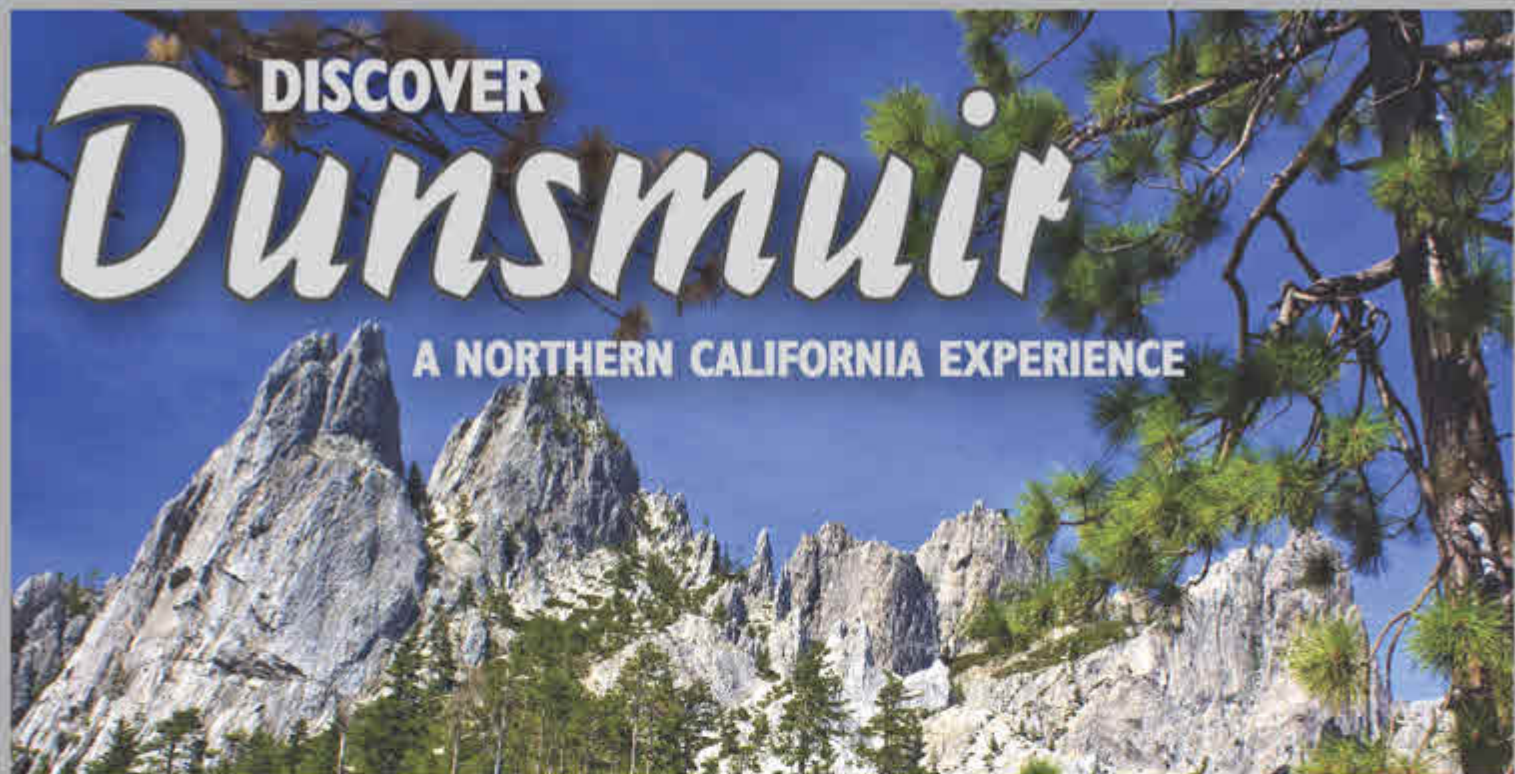


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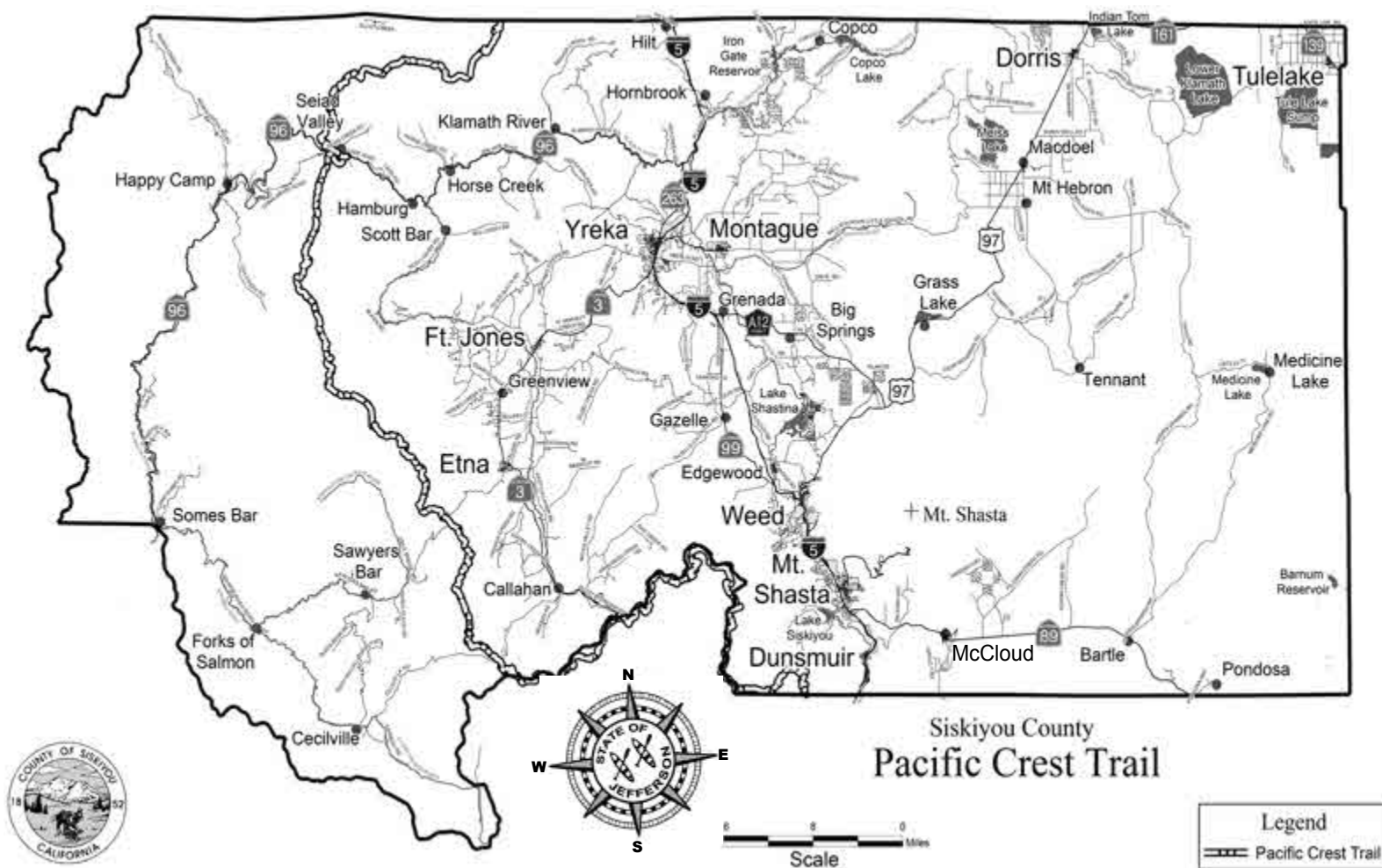
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