



The Historacle

The Official Newsletter of the
Talent Historical Society

Volume 27 Issue 2

June 2021

The Bear Creek Community Bird Survey

by Debra Moon - Report and Photographs by Emmalisa Whalley

The bird survey is a collaboration between the Rogue Valley Audubon Society, Klamath Bird Observatory, Rogue River Watershed Council, the Southern Oregon Land Conservancy, and the southern Oregon birding community.

The September 2020 fire disrupted all our lives and left many homeless. Our bird population, depending on the riparian habitats along Bear Creek, possibly suffered as much or more than our human population. We miss the vegetation of our beautiful Greenway, but birds and other creatures miss it more.

The survey, created by the four entities mentioned above, and depending heavily on local birders for their observations, wants to generate data to track the changes in bird populations along Bear Creek over time, and to quantify how bird populations respond to habitat changes and restoration efforts as the riparian habitat recovers from the 2020 fires. The surveys are taking place in severely burned, moderately burned, and unburned areas, so that changes in the burned areas can be compared with unburned areas.

Our very own birder, Emmalisa Whalley, THS Board Member and Webmaster, is participating in the survey in two sections which have two transects each. She has shared the results of her observations with us. She is covering two transects in the Newbry Park area and recently added another section with two transects in the Suncrest section of the Bear Creek burn. Each transect is about a mile long. Emmalisa goes with a partner or two and identifies species and counts numbers of each species accurately. Being a great



This handsome pair of Wood Ducks were seen trying to nest in a tree during the March 26th survey of the Newbry Park transects.

lover of birds and very familiar with just which species were along Bear Creek before the fire, these walks and counts are hard for Emmalisa, but she wants to see the birds come back and help with the restoration of this important natural area in our community that we all value.

Emmalisa's first official walk was on February 12th and she relates her reaction, "The part that hit me hardest while walking this part of the parks burned sections is that you can see the creek the whole time. Usually, the creek would be obscured by trees and there were only a few open patches where you could see the creek. It makes you realize how much was burned in that fire."

However, there were things she observed that were very positive too. On a walk with her mother before starting the official surveys, she saw 50 Mourning

Doves in the first transect. On February 12th there were 77. So already their numbers were increasing. She was able to identify 31 species in transect A and 25 species in transect B during her February walk. Highlights were a pair of Canvasback Ducks, 90 American Wigeons along with other duck species and some Canadian Geese in the pond. She was happy to see some Yellow-Rumped Warblers in the trees. She saw a pair of Common Mergansers in the creek itself.

The birders try to go the same time each day, usually right after sunrise, and they divide tasks of sighting and identifying, counting, and recording. They record this all on Ebird. Ebird is an app used by birders to keep track of the birds seen and their location. The app is a product of Cornell University who in turn use the information to track birds

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Talent Historical Society

The Talent Historical Society researches and preserves the history of the Talent area in Southern Oregon. We offer a collection of historical archives to help local residents and visitors become better acquainted with our area's rich history.

We are members of the Jackson County Heritage Association; a group of heritage nonprofits dedicated to the collection, preservation, and interpretation of Southern Oregon's cultural history.

We operate a museum and meeting place located at:

105 North Market Street
Talent, Oregon

The museum is open Saturday and Sunday from 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm

General Business/Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 582
Talent, OR 97540

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Web Page: www.talenthistory.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/talenthistory/

The Historacle is published quarterly.

Editor: Myke Gelhaus

You may submit your written work about historical Talent to be considered for publication in the THS newsletter. Our research library is ready for you to get started on an interesting local article! We are especially looking for more tales from early to middle 20th Century,

MUSEUM HOURS
SATURDAY & SUNDAY
1:00 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Memberships Since Last Issue

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Jennifer Van Datta

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Our Bird Photographer
Emmalisa Whalley

**“There is an unreasonable joy to be had from
the observation of small birds going about
their bright, oblivious business”**

Grant Hutchison, [The Complete Lachlan](#)

Talent Historical Society Projects

by Debra Moon

Thanks to our generous funding agencies, Oregon Parks and Recreation, Oregon Heritage Commission, and the Jackson County Cultural Coalition, THS has some ongoing grant projects that are benefitting the community. Also, thanks to the grant administrators' understanding, we have been given an extension on the timeline for the projects. Completion was supposed to be by the end of the year, 2020. However, since these projects are targeting school-aged children and their families, and since our community has been greatly affected by the pandemic and the September fire, we were given until the end of this school year to finish the projects.

Local History Curriculum for Talent Elementary

Jan Wright, our Historian, and Debra Moon, Board Member, finished a replication of a 1956-1966 history record of our town in large book format. This large book was originally made by a well-loved teacher, Genevieve Holdridge, and her 3rd grade students. In addition, Jan and Debra wrote a local history curriculum unit for 2nd and 3rd grade students at Talent Elementary. Jan, Debra and Ron Medinger, THS Board President, completed an exhibit of the *History of Schools in Talent* to go with the curriculum. The exhibit has not yet been viewed by the public because the Museum has been closed due to pandemic restrictions. However, 2nd and 3rd grade students, and some 7th and 8th grade students, have come to see the exhibit in small groups. The local history materials have been distributed to Talent Elementary teachers, who started using it this spring. Emmalisa Whalley, our Webmaster, also posted the pages of the large book and all the curriculum pieces on our website last May so that homebound students, parents, or classroom teachers, could access it online. If you'd like to see the materials, go to www.talenthistory.org, and click on Local History Curriculum.

Collecting Fire Experience Stories

In December of last year, THS was given permission from our ever understanding funders, to shift gears and spend some of our remaining grant funds on

documenting the Almeda Fire by collecting personal stories from residents. Serendipitously, in January of this year, we were contacted by Marcel D'Haem, a 7th and 8th grade Middle School Language and Social Studies teacher, to work with him and his students. They are interviewing community members and writing up their stories to document the fire in our town. Willow McCloud, THS Vice-President, is also video recording some personal fire stories at the Museum on Sundays, by appointment. We hope to make a book of all the stories in collaboration with Talent Middle School. Many of the stories are appearing in the *Historacle*.

If you are interested in submitting a written story of your own, please contact Myke Gelhaus, THS Editor of the *Historacle* at myke505@gmail.com. If you'd like to record your story on video, call the Museum and leave a message, 541-512-8838. Someone will put you in touch with Willow to make an appointment.



President's Message by Ron Medinger

It is with great pleasure that I announce the re-opening of the Talent Historical Society Museum!

Beginning May 22nd, the museum began to offer itself to Talent Historical Society members and the general public on Saturdays and Sundays from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. All museum staff members have been fully vaccinated and are anxious to see you all again.

Please drop by to visit your hometown museum!



Talent Coloring Book

No one remembers whose idea this was, but somewhere along the line, THS Board Members all agreed that it would be fun and educational to make a coloring book for elementary-school-aged children containing historical sites and figures of Talent. THS Board Member, Myke Reeser, has been drawing images for the book (see sample coloring book

page with this article). Emmalisa Whalley has agreed to take photos of significant persons and places in Talent's history, which other Board Members are providing, and render them into coloring book images using a special software. Jan Wright is providing text with some his-



A page from the Coloring Book.

torical facts to go with each page, and Debra Moon will be producing a book from the images and text. The coloring book will be made available to children who visit the Museum in the future.

These projects have all been made possible with funds from the sponsoring agencies mentioned above, along with valuable volunteer hours from Board Members and community members.

The Bear Creek Community Bird Survey

Continued from Page One

and trends. Emmalisa and partners went twice to these two transects in March. Here are some highlights from those walks:

“Near the pond we found a Peregrine Falcon who watched us the whole time we were walking towards it, as my photos show. And we had a Cooper’s Hawk fly over us. At the pond the Canvasbacks were there again, this time I saw three pairs. Towards the end of Transect A we saw a Red-Tailed Hawk gathering twigs which then showed us where its nest was which looked quite precarious, it will be interesting to follow up on this in future survey walks. Over the pond we saw Tree Swallows about which I had been most concerned since most of their nesting trees were burned in the fire.”

We started off in the opposite direction we had taken in the previous walk so that we didn’t have the sun in our face trying to bird. As we came across the bridge, we saw Turkey Vultures in the trees and we heard the Belted Kingfisher again which uses Bear Creek to hunt. Then we saw a Brown Creeper which was great since it was the first time I have counted one on the bird survey walks. Right after the bridge we saw three Black Phoebes flying in and out of the trees. One of the goals after we were done with the survey walk was to see if we could sight a Clay Sparrow, a rare bird that had been spotted in the area by other birders. As we got near the overpass bridge, we saw two otters interacting. I have never seen otters in Bear Creek so that was a lovely surprise for me.” Emmalisa reports that the Wren-tits, which are birds that live around the edge of water, probably did not survive the fire. There have been studies on them, and their whole life travel area is 200

yards. She did notice new species not sighted before including a Peregrine Falcon, a Sharp-Shinned Hawk, American Goldfinches, a Red-Shouldered Hawk and a Ruby-Crowned Kinglet. There were many more Wood Ducks, paired up and nesting. A Great Blue Heron was also sighted.

The walk in April was along the Suncrest portion of the creek, which was badly burned and will be watched by

Emmalisa and her partners from now on. These sections yielded some surprises:

“We only had a few ground birds like the Golden-Crowned Sparrow and Mourning Doves and I even spotted a Lincoln Sparrow in amongst the Golden-Crowns. There were a few Mallards on the creek, and we saw a Great Blue Heron on the adjacent pond behind one of the other burnt housing developments. Highlights from this Transect were seeing the Red-Tailed Hawk nest with a bird on

the nest which I’m assuming was the female and the male flying in with prey in its talons to give to the female. The

other highlight, which wasn’t a bird, was an Otter we saw traveling down Bear Creek.

“There weren’t as many birds in this (2nd) transect, but the highlight was seeing a Great Horned Owl in a tree and finally seeing Tree Swallows flying around. I have been worried about the Tree Swallows because most of their nesting trees were burned in the fire. There were plenty of Canada Geese on the ground and flying around us. There was also a Cooper’s Hawk sitting on a blade in the orchard on a wind machine which I call Ground Helicopters. As we were walking out, we spotted a Brown Creeper and a Common Yellowthroat.”

At the time of writing this article, the April report for Newbry Park was not completed, so numbers have not yet been reported. However, overall, in just the two and a half months of observation, it seems that quite a variety of species are returning to the Bear Creek area, some even thriving and increasing. There are a few species that have not been seen again, such as the Wren-tits, and there are the Tree Swallows recently returned to their habitat. This is a fascinating project, very relevant to our community. It is important to restore the creatures of nature indigenous to our area as we also rebuild homes for people. The survey is appreciated by all who love birds, and who doesn’t love birds, really?



It was exciting to spot this Peregrine Falcon in the Newbry Park survey sections.



Newbry Park Burn -- The creek can be seen from the path because so much vegetation is missing.

About Birds

Birds are vertebrate animals adapted for flight.

Many can also run, jump, swim, and dive. Some, like penguins, have lost the ability to fly but retained their wings. Birds are found world-wide and in all habitats. The largest is the nine-foot-tall ostrich. The smallest is the two-inch-long bee hummingbird.

Everything about the anatomy of a bird reflects its ability to fly. The wings, for example, are shaped to create lift. The leading edge is thicker than the back edge, and they are covered in feathers that narrow to a point. Airplane wings are modeled after bird wings.

The bones and muscles of the wing are also highly specialized. The main bone, the humerus, which is similar to the upper arm of a mammal, is hollow instead of solid. It also connects to the bird's air sac system, which, in turn, connects to its lungs. The powerful flight muscles of the shoulder attach to the keel, a special ridge of bone that runs down the center of the wide sternum, or breastbone. The tail feathers are used for steering.

Birds have a unique digestive system that allows them to eat when they can—usually on the fly—and digest later. They use their beaks to grab and swallow food. Even the way a bird reproduces is related to flight. Instead of carrying the extra weight of developing young inside their bodies, they lay eggs and incubate them in a nest.

The fossil record shows that birds evolved alongside the dinosaurs during the Jurassic period 160 million years ago. The best known fossil is *archaeopteryx*, which was about the size of a crow.

*From the National Geographic book,
[Animal Encyclopedia](#), 2012*



Blue Heron in Lynn Newbry Park area.



A Northern Flicker in the Suncrest survey in April.



A section of the Suncrest burn

Our Almeda Fire Experience

Mary & Ted Tsui

My awareness of September 8th, 2020 started about 3:30am when howling winds disturbed my sleep. Like the mistral – it wasn't restful. Around 7:30, walking to Talent Avenue for the newspaper, I passed our seasonal pond where, weeks earlier, neighbors had surreptitiously placed an enormous, heavy rubber duck: the wind had blown it onto dry land. After retrieving the paper and walking back, the duck was now even 15 feet higher, on the level of the road. With the winds still howling, I dragged the duck back to the front porch where it couldn't get blown any further. I also thought that our daily walk wasn't going to happen.

At 11am, I was in a Zoom meeting. Around 11:30, our host suddenly disappeared; since she'd been having technical glitches, I paid little attention. (Later, I learned she had been told to leave immediately; her home did not survive the fire). Around 11:45, my phone rang and while I don't take calls during a meeting, I saw it was from a neighbor's ranch hand – a woman who never calls without a reason.

She said there was a fire in Ashland – probably on Ashland Mine Road, and it was heading straight for the ranch. If true, it was on the west side of US99 and would lead directly to our properties south of Talent, above the railroad tracks. This would be the ONLY notice we ever received of the fire.

I alerted my husband and went outside

to look, my heart sinking as I saw enormous white and black smoke clouds billowing to the south and being buffeted east and west as it headed our way. Our first thought was to put sprinklers around the east perimeter and on the roof – this meant taking yard sprinklers, hooking them to hoses and hoisting them on the roof.

Around 12:30, we decided to round up the cats, get a go-bag together and put it all in the car. The power was already off. Thoughts of saving some of our lives' treasures were simply passing notions – there was no time and we mainly wanted to save ourselves, the pets, and our computers, where the bulk of our needed information was stored. And the passports – don't ask me why. We continued to watch.

My thoughts turned to my deceased parents, who had personally dug our well, personally built the house (I'm sure with whatever was lying about as mill ends), and very much wanted us to be here. At the same time, I knew they would be saying, "Leave!"

Around 1:30, we saw a police car traveling north on Talent Avenue, telling people on the east side to evacuate. While we were not advised to evacuate, we were keenly aware that the distance was not that great and that fire typically moves uphill, particularly with the winds that day. We prepared to leave. In what was surely the most bizarre decision, my husband insisted that we pack his tuxedo, dress shoes and shirt and my evening gown, jewelry and high heels: he had earlier arranged for us

to have our wedding anniversary photographs taken on Thursday, September 10th, in the Ashland church where we were married, and he wasn't about to postpone that date.

As we headed north along Talent Avenue, the evacuation was in full force; the road

was a parking lot. It was absolute gridlock. We texted with a neighbor, who had also made the crushing decision to evacuate, leaving her gates open so her stable of rescue horses and other animals could get out. As we approached Creel Road, traffic was at a standstill; cars, trucks, and trailers were pouring out of side roads attempting to get into the parking lot that Talent Avenue had become. We didn't move forward for at least 20 minutes, during which time we saw the black clouds advancing northward;



The Duck Pond days before the fire.

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we became convinced that evacuation would lead us into the fire, or worse, we would be immolated in place.

We u-turned, along with our neighbor, and headed south toward home, where the skies were blue again. For a while, it appeared that we were out of the woods. Then the explosions started. And smoke started up from Highway 99 just below us. The ranch hand texted us again – she was far up the mountains between Ashland and Talent and was certain Jackson Wellsprings was burning; if so, that meant the west side of 99 was on fire and heading directly for us.

We soon realized that the fire had NOT gone to Jackson Wellsprings, but had jumped to the west side of 99 near New Sammy's Cowboy Bistro, almost directly below us. A helicopter was repeatedly dipping into the TID canal below our neighbors, flying out and dropping the water. An aerial bomber flew unbelievably low, releasing the red flame retardant. Thinking the fire would surely head uphill toward us, we decided to head for Ashland. This was around 5:30pm.

As we entered 99 South, we saw smoke directly below our house and just kept going. The highway was clear to the south and it seemed authorities had closed 99 to northbound traffic. Sure enough, we saw our neighbor, Yassem Altunel, walking north so we pulled over to ask if we could help – he was walking to his house to see if he could save anything. We took him home.

Heading again to Ashland, we started looking for a hotel. Gas stations had long

lines. Ashland Springs Hotel was full. As we approached Ashland Avenue, freight trucks lined the roads. Traffic was nearly at a standstill. All the motels had “no vacancy” signs. My husband got on his phone to search for a vacancy and miraculously found one at Bard's Inn. Ironically, it's the most northerly Ashland hotel, closest to our home. We learned later that authorities had closed Interstate 5, forcing traffic onto local streets and roads and into whatever accommodations they could find. As a result, local people trying to escape and find shelter were at a great disadvantage; we were just lucky.

As we got set up, bought food and other supplies, we continued to get texts well into the night from friends giving us updates and inviting us to their homes in Medford – but we had every reason to believe the fire would go there next so opted to stay in Ashland. They were texting us with pictures of flareups all along Bear Creek well into Medford. Then the Central Point area flared up. Seeing this happen at night and knowing fire crews desperately needed assistance made the disaster all the worse.

Our rancher neighbor texted that our house was fine, as was our entire neighborhood, but the wind kept howling and changing direction. We have friends in Phoenix, where the fire was continuing its destruction. They told us they were at the high school and watching Cheryl Avenue burn – a block from their home; we urged them to leave.

Amazingly, we did get some sleep

that night.


At about 7:30am Wednesday morning, another neighbor, Jeff LaLande, called to tell us our house was fine and the sprinklers still going; we headed home. We knew Highway 99 was closed and that we'd have to take I5 and backroads, probably from the north Medford exit, but another neighbor told us Garfield was open, so it would be a shorter trip. This is how navigation in and out became a true wiki net between friends and neighbors who were either in need of directions or quick to relate their latest findings. Official information was hard to come by.

Coming into Talent from the northwest on Colver Road, we were startled to be going right through Talent on the fire line. Small flames were still burning. It seemed like a complete miracle that nothing on the west side of Talent Avenue had burned. That miracle was dampened by the utter destruction from downtown to Arnos Road on the east. At that point, we couldn't even see Highway 99; that remained the case except for the online video shot by someone early Wednesday morning.

For the next week or so, the backroads were the only way to get home. We could easily go south to Ashland on 99, but couldn't go back. Sure enough, we were blessed that our house and outbuildings were fine. And we had a generator, which of course hadn't been fired up in years. We got the last battery in the Valley, and with lots of help from friends, got it running.

Neighbors and friends were

Continued on Page 10



Rick Chester, Pharmacist
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My Mother's Daughter

The Continuing Memoirs of Jewel Donaca Lockard

Chapter 5 – The Economics of Living During the Depression

Dad never liked any place he ever lived. He always could find something wrong with it. I remember one time while the Doffs lived down the road, “old” Doff put his place up for sale and talked Dad into buying it, only Dad failed to tell Mom. So, since we would be leaving it, the real estate man came with some people to look our place over. Mom and I were completely puzzled so finally Mom asked him what they were doing. Finding out what was going on, she told him flatly that our place was not for sale. The man got mad, but that was the last of him. For myself, I was sure worried. I loved my home. As the years went by Dad finally said he loved his home too.

Once in a while Mom would suggest to Dad that we should go for a ride or go someplace, but to no avail, he always said too poor, no tires on the car or you like it here. So we never went anywhere. Even to go to town was an ordeal as Dad had to go real early in the morning. Then usually just to Talent where we turned in what eggs we had to sell and get a few groceries was all. When we went to Ashland or Medford, it was the same. I remember a little dime store where Leland and I bought little old snow pictures in frames with a cabin setting in snow. We liked little cabins. Then too in Ashland was Lithia Park. We kids didn't pay any attention to the playground, but liked to look at the animals at the little zoo they had. I remember seeing a moose once. They had deer, raccoons, guinea pigs and all kinds of birds. They had a duck pond, but not as elaborate as it is today. Once going by the duck pond I was gazing at the ducks and fell over a huge boulder in the path just as someone was taking a picture in my direction.

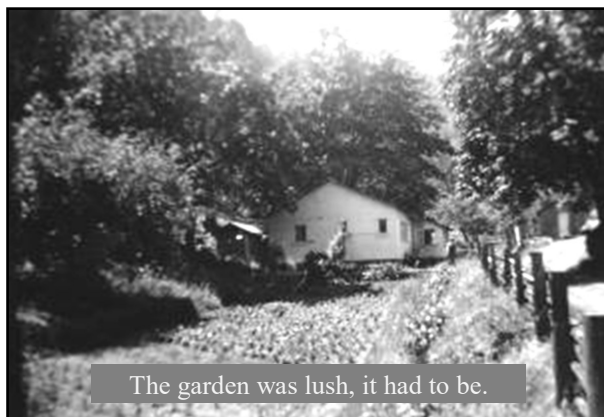
Gong to Medford was a long slow process as Dad took the back roads into Medford and back at 25 miles per hour. I used to get so tired of piddling along. Then we'd park by the courthouse or along the park and walk up into the middle

of town, a half a mile or so, to Woolworth's or Newberry's. Going home Dad would sometimes buy a package of goodie rolls to eat away on or he'd get a can of sardines (oval can) and then Mom would cook potatoes when we got home and we'd have a feast. Sometimes he'd get hamburger and we'd have hamburger and potatoes when we got home.

One time while in town I happened to run into cousin Vivian and a couple of her girlfriends. I was sixteen then and they asked me to eat with them in a little restaurant along Main Street. I knew I had to get back to the car as Mom, Dad and Leland were waiting on me, but I had never eaten in a restaurant and couldn't resist. I ordered chicken fried steak and they paid for it too. Sure was a big deal. I'd never eaten out before.



Alex, Leland and Jewel, the early years.



The garden was lush, it had to be.

It didn't make much difference if we went to town or not as we had no money. Mom didn't even have a purse for a long time. I think later she had an old flat brown one, no handle type. She wanted to get a bottle of hand lotion as her hands would crack open and bleed from scrubbing and cleaning, also from the cold. So she managed to buy a ten cent bottle

of Jergens' Lotion, only to have it slip from her hands and fall on the sidewalk and break. Mama stood there crying with me on the verge of tears. A man went by and looked at Mom and then to the ground and back to her with a funny look and went on down the street. Damn we were poor and I vowed right then that I never wanted to be poor in my life and I'd do something about it when I could. Another time in Woolworth's a couple of stupid women laughed and pointed, looking at Mom's hair. She had cut it herself, too short.

Once in a while Dad would buy a small piece of cheese that the grocer had in a round brick on the counter. Mom would make macaroni and cheese with it using milk and eggs. It was rather sharp cheese so I had no liking for it. At that time I didn't know there was a mild or any other kind.

We were so poor and Dad so tight, guess he had to be, there wasn't much. One time Mom asked for a spool of thread and all Hell broke loose. He ranted, he raved, and he cursed. A battle ensued, but I think Mom got her thread.

Before we got a car Steve Lunik

bought our groceries and other things we needed as Dad cut wood for him. Money got settled in the fall after the wood was sold. Not much money, as a property payment had to come out each month (\$10.00).

Another time Mom wrote soap (bar soap to wash with) on the list and Dad got mad. “Soap, always wanting soap. Damn lousy son of a b****, always scrubbing.” Mom was

badly hurt, but I think she got the soap. He always griped at her for trying to keep the shack clean.

Some times Mom absolutely had to have some money, for instance when she needed to buy a broom, so she saved every egg she could find to sell. Meanwhile, to help, I got the idea of making mud pies and of course you used eggs. I found one

and broke it into the mud pies. Mom found out and she sure blistered my butt for me. I felt very bad over it as I hadn't realized how badly she needed them, being just a kid.

The only shoes Mom had were some high lace hiking boots that she wore all the time - not even slippers. Soon a neighbor gave Mom a pair of brown high heeled pointed dress shoes. She'd wear them some, but her feet would hurt her badly. One evening Dad was sitting in the kitchen of the old house smoking and finally he remarked, "All you do is go peck-peck-peck-peck around in those shoes." Mom was very mad. Shoes were made of leather and not being able to have them mended by a shoe cobbler, you did it yourself. You bought shoe tacks and metal curved deals so a person could tack them on the toe or heel if they became worn.

Mom would put a burlap sack (we called them gunnysacks) on the step going into the house where we would wipe our muddy feet. When it became dirty she'd throw it away and we'd get another. Cattle feed came in gunnysacks. One time she got the idea of crocheting rugs out of Dad's and Leland's worn out pants legs, so for years pants leg rags were made into rugs. I have some yet in 2007.



Pants Leg Rugs

Mom had no cookie cutter, she used a tin can; no paring knife, so she used a butcher knife; no rolling pin, she used a glass milk bottle; no pancake turner so she used a knife. The food grinder and the lemon squeezer we managed to get are still with us in use today. We used oil cloth on the table and once in a rare while we got a pretty new piece.

When Leland and I were small we played a lot in the two huge sawdust piles where a sawmill had been before our time. We'd dig holes down in it and crawl in. It was scratchy. The mill was on the

line between this place and the James place now. At one time there were little tent houses and a cook shack where the garage is now. Cans were thrown out from the cook house where the house once stood. Spring water ran in the main canyon, no ditches had been dug yet.

We kids also liked to hike around by ourselves, most of the time within ear shot of Mom. Once we wandered this way up Beeson Road - just around the turn there in the road were huge fresh bear tracks. As little as we were, we knew what they were and we skedaddled home.

Having no electricity, the beds were cold at night in the winter. I always had cold feet when I went to bed because after supper I sat down in the kitchen at the table doing art or something. Cold came under the door and cracks in the floor. Mom would put irons on the stove and when they got hot enough she'd wrap them in towels or something and put them in the beds. This helped but didn't entirely solve the cold.

We had a little heater with an iron top and iron legs, but the body was of tin. The tin would burn through, then it had to be patched with pieces of tin and baling wire. We had to watch that the sparks didn't burn into the floor.

Dad was nuts about the little wild blackberries (Dewberries) that grew low to the ground in patches in the woods, especially where it had been recently logged. We didn't have Himalayas at that time, they came later, and he didn't like them anyway, they were too seedy to eat. Mom would stew the blackberries and we'd eat them with homemade bread and cow's cream. I liked the jelly, but Mom didn't usually make it, she wanted us to eat them as stewed fruit, probably because the canning process was easier and used less sugar.

So we would go to different places to pick the Dewberries where we thought we might find them. A few times we went over in the main canyon up in the logging woods off the CCC road above the Greek's property. It was an adventure for us. Once when picking there we heard the growl of a mother bear and we quickly let her have that patch.

Jewel's story will continue in the next issue.



Dewberries

Dewberries are a group of species in the genus *Rubus*, section *Rubus*, closely related to blackberries. They are small trailing (rather than upright or high-arching) brambles with multi-celled fruits, reminiscent of the raspberry, but are usually purple to black instead of red. Dewberries are common throughout most of the Northern Hemisphere and are thought of as a beneficial weed. The leaves can be used to make herbal tea, and the berries are edible and taste sweet. They can be eaten raw, or used to make cobbler, jam, or pie. They are sometimes called ground berries.

Around March and April, the plants start to grow white flowers that develop into small green berries. The tiny green berries grow red and then a deep purple-blue as they ripen. When the berries are ripe, they are tender and difficult to pick in any quantity without squashing them. The plants do not have upright canes like some other *Rubus* species, but have stems that trail along the ground, putting forth new roots along the length of the stem. The stems are covered with fine spines or stickers. The berries are sweet and, for many, less seedy than blackberries.

Himalayan blackberry is an introduced noxious weed, originally from Europe. The person who gets the blame or the credit for the Himalayan blackberry, depending on your perspective, is late-19th century and early-20th century West Coast uber-botanist and cultivar enthusiast Luther Burbank. It has now spread to become one of the worst weeds all along the Pacific Coast from British Columbia into southern California. Himalayan blackberry out-competes native understory vegetation and prevents the establishment of native trees that require sun for germination such as Pacific Madrone, Douglas Fir and Western White Pine.



From left to right: Nick Smith; Nick Medinger (kneeling); Emmalisa Whalley; Stella Medinger; Dave Hodson; Daisy the dog; Ruby Whalley; Willow McCloud; Calvin Wells; David Ross; Myke Reeser and Lunette Gleason-Fleming.

Almeda Fire Memories

By Mary and Ted Tsui *Cont from Page 7*

wonderful. We did gasoline runs for each other, traded flashlights, lanterns, and batteries and generally recreated a sense of community. More distant neighbors were walking bottles of water to those in need and generally checking on everyone.

The heavy smoke from the California fires was the most depressing thing about the days after the fire. Our solar lanterns couldn't get much of a charge, so were only good for a few hours each evening. We wound up wearing N95 masks with 3-layer cloth masks on top of those. We watched air particulates climb into the high 600s.

The phone calls and texts were a deluge: people from all over the country trying to get in touch and see if we were OK. The national media didn't help – they showed the same video clip over and over and repeatedly said that both Talent and Phoenix were utterly destroyed; worse, they made it sound as if the fire was ongoing. I had explained to one friend that while it was awful, the bulk of Talent was intact; she said, “no, it's not! I saw it on TV!” One day, a Talent police car drove up (and we're not even in the City) to check on us – a friend in the Midwest had emailed them to check on us – and the police took time out of their very busy work to do just that. It was pretty embarrassing.

We continued to overnight in Ashland until Friday, and then, still without power, we came home for good. The generator kept the refrigerator running and we had battery power for light. If we saw a Pacific Power truck, we'd try to approach, but they almost always got away before we could reach them. Finally getting to speaking range, we asked how long they thought it would be – and they of course, had no clue and were working 24/7 to restore power; the number of power poles destroyed was massive.

On Sunday, we went to friends in Medford for showers and an early supper, wanting to get home before dark. As we came again by Colver Road into Talent, we saw a few house lights. Then we saw street lights! And stores with lights! It was so cheering. Like Christmas in September. We never for a moment thought the power restoration would persist, but we kept seeing lights as we got further south. Then, the most miraculous was that as we got over the railroad tracks to our house, even we and our neighbors had lights!

After that, it was cleanup, waiting for the air to clear, back to the pandemic and figuring out how we could help those who'd lost everything, while having a renewed appreciation for good neighbors.

Talent Tomato Fund

Talent Historical Society's annual Talent Tomato Sale kicked off with Nancy Olson-Jones' pre-order on February 21st being the first order of the year. Orders continued to roll in over the next two and a half months culminating on May 7th with Talent Tomato Delivery Day.

We had eleven volunteers (and Nick's dog Daisy) in six cars, with one trailer, make the tomato run to Grant's Pass on Friday, May 7th. After picking up the 150 gallon and 300 four-inch sized Talent Tomatoes needed to deliver on their routes, the energetic crews spread out across the valley bringing happiness to every stop.

Most tomatoes were delivered to customer's homes on Friday afternoon and evening, but there were some delivered on Saturday.

Our annual fundraising sale had a good year in 2021, selling all the gallon pot sized Talent Tomatoes available by April 17th. By the end of the sale, we sold all but three of the four-inch pots, the most successful sale we've held to date.

Although we did not sell Talent Tomato T-shirts this year, our fundraiser was helped along by raffling a beautiful hand-stitched quilt created by Jan Wright. Dawn Radloff-Mouron was the lucky winner drawn by Jan from all the entries. Congratulations to Dawn! The raffle brought an additional \$460 to the fundraising total. In addition to the quilt raffle, we offered, and sold, six collectible Talent Tomato facemasks featuring the photographic talent of Willow McCloud.

All in all, THS made \$1,837.50 from the Tomato Sale effort with the raffle, mask sales and donations counted in. We all thank you Talent Tomato fans and supporters of Talent Historical Society for your kindness and generosity. You help us preserve the history of Talent!



The Talent Historical Society Membership Application

The Talent Historical Society was founded in 1994 as a non-profit organization dedicated to collecting, preserving and interpreting the history of the Talent area in Southern Oregon. By becoming a member of the Society, you provide valuable support of the Society's ongoing work.

To become a member, please select a membership level, complete the form below, and return the completed form along with your membership payment. All memberships, regardless of level, are greatly appreciated.

Name _____ Date _____

Mailing/Street Address

City, State, Zip

Phone	e-mail
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Member Type: ☐ New ☐ Renewing

Membership Level:	<input type="checkbox"/> Junior (12-18) - \$10	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual - \$20	<input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime Individual - \$200
	<input type="checkbox"/> Business - \$50	<input type="checkbox"/> Family - \$30	<input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime Family - \$300
	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual/Family Sponsorship - \$100 or more		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Business Sponsorship - \$100 or more		
Donation in addition to membership: \$			

Amount Enclosed: \$

Dues include our quarterly newsletter: *The Historacle*

Check if you want it sent: electronically by email in lieu of paper []
or by regular mail via post office []

☐ If you would like to volunteer to help in any way, please check the box, and we will contact you.

Please make checks payable to: Talent Historical Society

Send completed form along with payment to: Talent Historical Society
P.O. Box 582

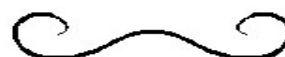
Thank you!

Talent, OR 97540

Talent Historical Society Board of Directors:

Ron Medinger	President - Membership Chair & Treasurer
Willow McCloud	Vice-President & Art/Design Chair
Jan Wright	Secretary & Historian
Emmalisa Whalley	Webmaster
Debra Moon	Grant Administrator & Outreach Coordinator
Cherie Brooks	Board Member
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Lunette Gleason-Fleming	Board Member
Bob Casebeer	Board Member - Emeritus

The Talent Historical Society Board Meeting is held monthly on the second Tuesday of each month at 6:00 p.m. at the museum building at 105 North Market Street, Talent, Oregon.





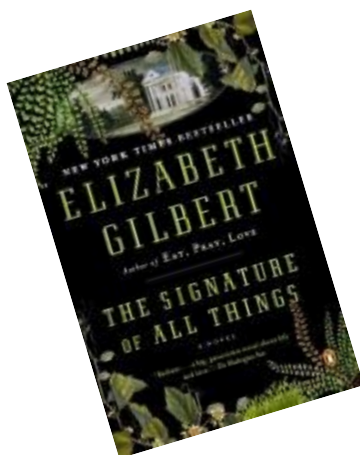
Talent Historical Society
P.O Box 582
Talent, OR 97540

Talent Book Club Resumes Meetings

by Debra Moon

Not everyone knows that in the past the Talent Historical Society (THS) has supported a Book Club. The Talent Book Club was meeting in the Museum monthly but had to go on hiatus due to Covid 19. The good news is that we're regrouping in June! We would like to meet outdoors for a few months without masks. We hope that interested members will have been vaccinated and will feel comfortable meeting under these conditions.

We meet the 4th Thursday each month. The first meeting will be June 24th, starting at 6 pm, at Gather Café (formerly the Downtowne Coffee Shop), 200 Talent Avenue, under their gazebo. We may alter starting time according to the group desires for meetings after that. The Talent Book Club chooses an eclectic assortment of books to read, but our favorites are historical novels (of course). The book choice for June is *The Signature of All Things* by Elizabeth Gilbert. She is the author of *Eat, Pray, Love*. *The Signature of All Things* is nothing like *Eat, Pray, Love*, but it is beautifully and skillfully written. It is a historical novel about a woman botanist in the 1800s, and it is very interesting.



We decide future books through consensus at our meetings. If you are interested in joining, there is a \$20 annual donation to THS (unless you are a member of the Talent Historical Society—then your membership covers this). If you'd like to join, or need more information, just email Debra Moon, debra.moon7@gmail.com.