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The Willamette Valley's Premier Lifestyle Quarterly

Willamette Valley *Life*

Premier Issue!

Winter 2010/Issue 1

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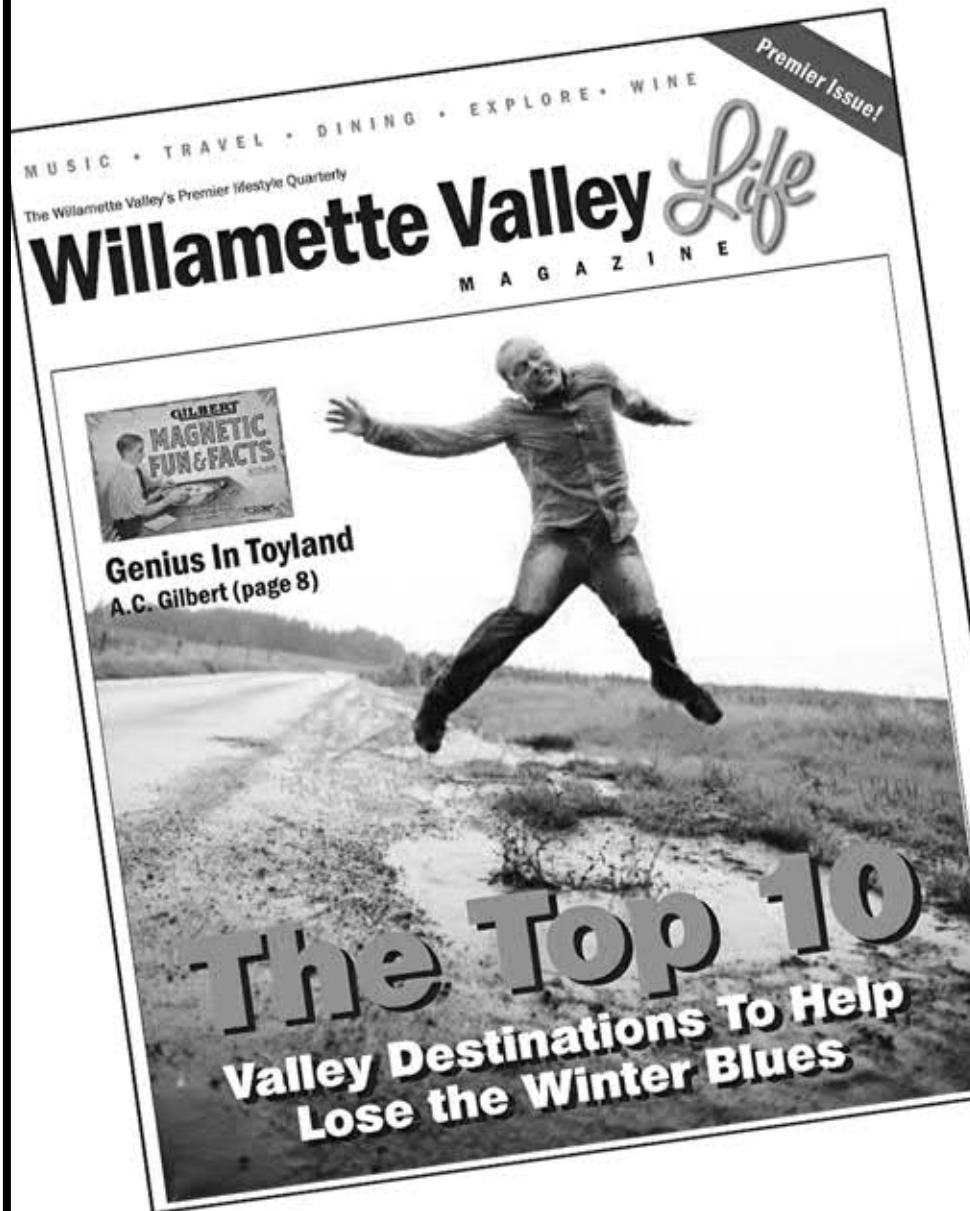
Genius In Toyland: A.C. Gilbert (page 6)



Top 10

Valley Destinations To Help Lose The Winter Blues

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Willamette Valley Life

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It is our pleasure to introduce you to *Willamette Valley Life*, a quarterly magazine that is a literary tribute to one of the most beautiful places in the U.S. – Oregon's Willamette Valley.

For two decades, we traveled from Texas to the Willamette Valley to visit family. Always struck with the natural beauty of the region, we made this area our permanent home in 2004. We have been amazed at the variety of things to do and places to explore in the Valley.

There aren't too many places where you can go whale watching in the morning, have lunch along the banks of the Willamette River, and finish your evening in a mountain lodge next to a waterfall. We think we have the closest thing to the Garden of Eden on the planet!

We hope you will enjoy our first issue of *Willamette Valley Life*. We look forward to the coming year and sharing our adventure with you.

– Randy and Dawn Hill

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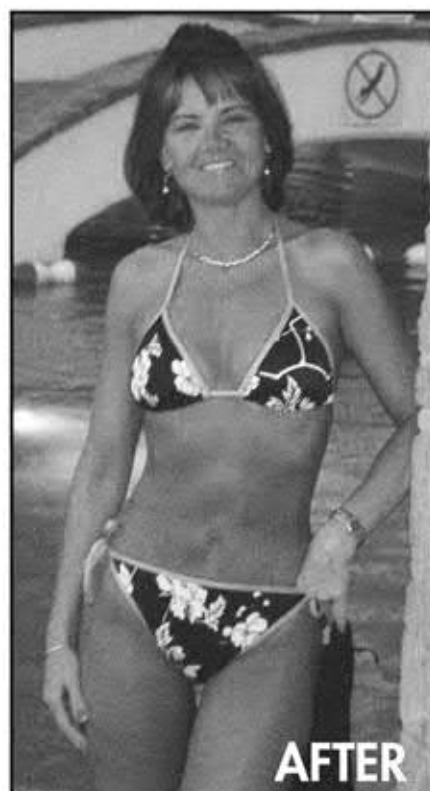
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The Oregon Truffle Festival, January 29-31. Photo by John Valls

Mushroom Madness

Old world France joins new world Oregon at fifth annual Oregon Truffle Festival

Old World France will meet New World Oregon for a fête du truffes (celebration of truffles) at the fifth annual Oregon Truffle Festival, to be held Jan. 29 through Jan. 31, 2010, in Eugene, Oregon.

For the past four years, truffle enthusiasts, chefs, foodies, truffle hunters and truffle growers have gathered at the festival for three days of tastings, tours and workshops to celebrate Oregon's most prized native ingredient. The 2010 festival, the only of its kind in North America, will feature a decidedly French connection as Oregon's truffles begin to join their famed European cousins on the international culinary stage.

Traveling from France to share their culinary passion and prowess with other participants will be renowned chef Jacques Ratier and his wife, Noëlle, whose restaurant, La Récréation, was prominently featured in the popular book, *From Here, You Can't See Paris*, by American author Michael S. Sanders.

Sanders, a widely published travel and food writer, will also lend his insight at the festival. "From Here, You Can't See Paris" is the story of his year in tiny Les Arques, a hilltop village in a remote corner of France untouched by the modern era. It chronicles the dying village's struggle to survive, and of the efforts of the

Ratiers, whose bustling restaurant — the village's sole business — has helped ensure the village's future. The village is in a region known for many local delicacies, most notably, black truffles.

Also on hand to share his expertise at the Oregon Truffle Festival will be Pierre Sourzat, a fifth generation truffle cultivator and scientist, who directs a truffle college in Le Montat, located just a few kilometers from the Ratiers' restaurant.

These special guests will be on hand for the entire festival, and will launch the event Friday, Jan. 29, with *La Récréation*, an evening of conviviality around the table that will celebrate the magnificent truffles from the Old World of France and the New World of Oregon.

"Within the rarified world of truffles, Oregon is known as the premier center of research and expertise outside of Europe,"

Also new for 2010 will be a two-day seminar, believed to be the first of its kind in North America, to train dogs for truffle-hunting. Twelve lucky New World dogs will learn Old World techniques for finding truffles that are ripe and ready for eating. The seminar will be taught by Jim Sanford of Blackberry Farm Resort in Tennessee and by Jean Rand, owner of Oregon's most accomplished truffle dog. Participants will get the singularly authentic experience of joining the dogs on the hunt for wild truffles in their native habitat.

Other activities at the fifth annual Oregon Truffle Festival will include experiencing all aspects of the fabled fungi, including learning to cook with them, learning to cultivate them, and pairing them in sumptuous meals with Oregon's legendary wines. The Grand Truffle Dinner will feature a multi-course truffle feast created especially for the event by five of Oregon's most notable chefs.

According to Charles Lefevre, festival co-founder and owner of New World Truffieres, culinary truffles are found in just a handful of regions around the world, and are among the world's most expensive foods. "Within the rarified world of truffles, Oregon is known as the premier center of research and expertise outside of Europe," he says. "We are extremely honored to host our European counterparts at the festival to celebrate this joyful community and our mutual passion."



Romance and Yearning in the Willamette Valley

The Willamette Valley Community Orchestra presents, "Romantic Yearning." Romance and yearning blend together in this concert featuring the perennial favorite violin concerto by Bruch with violin soloist Jessica Lambert joining the WVCO. Brahms' sweepingly romantic Fourth Symphony and the overture to Wagner's only comic opera "Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg" round out this program.

When and where: Saturday, March 13, 2010 - 4:00 p.m. First Christian Church of Albany, 432 SW Ferry Street; Albany. Sunday, March 14, 2010 - 4:00 p.m., Ashbrook Independent School, 4045 Research Way; Corvallis.



Vinyl is still alive and well

In the cold, hard world of CDs and digital downloads, vinyl is far from dead and gone. Join thousands of other vinylphiles (vinyl record lovers) for a trip down memory lane at the 22nd Annual Eugene Record Convention on Sunday, January 31 at the Eugene Hilton. Info: (541) 485-7920.

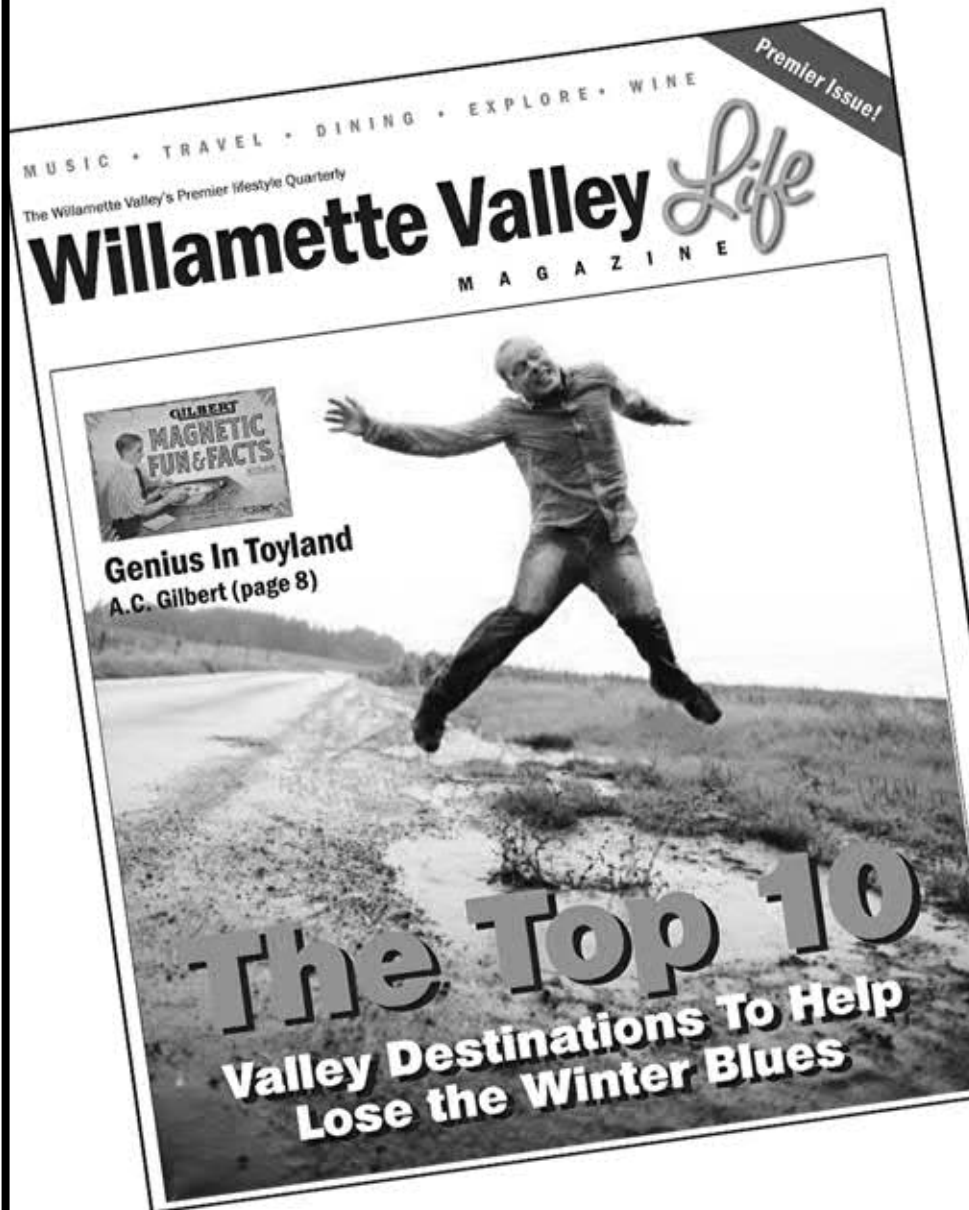
Extreme Chocolate

Saturday February 13th, 12 noon — 4pm, Chocolate entrepreneur Chef Carrie Wong of Extreme Chocolates will personally introduce her newest creations at The Four Graces tasting room in Dundee. Enjoy this unique pairing of exquisite hand made chocolates with each of The Four Graces divine white and red wines at The Four Graces tasting room, 9605 NE Fox Farm Road, Dundee. Cost for all wines and chocolate samples is \$15, waived for The Four Graces wine club members.



For further information: call The Four Graces at (503) 554-8000 email: info@thefourgraces.com website www.thefourgraces.com or Extreme Chocolates: (503) 581-6099

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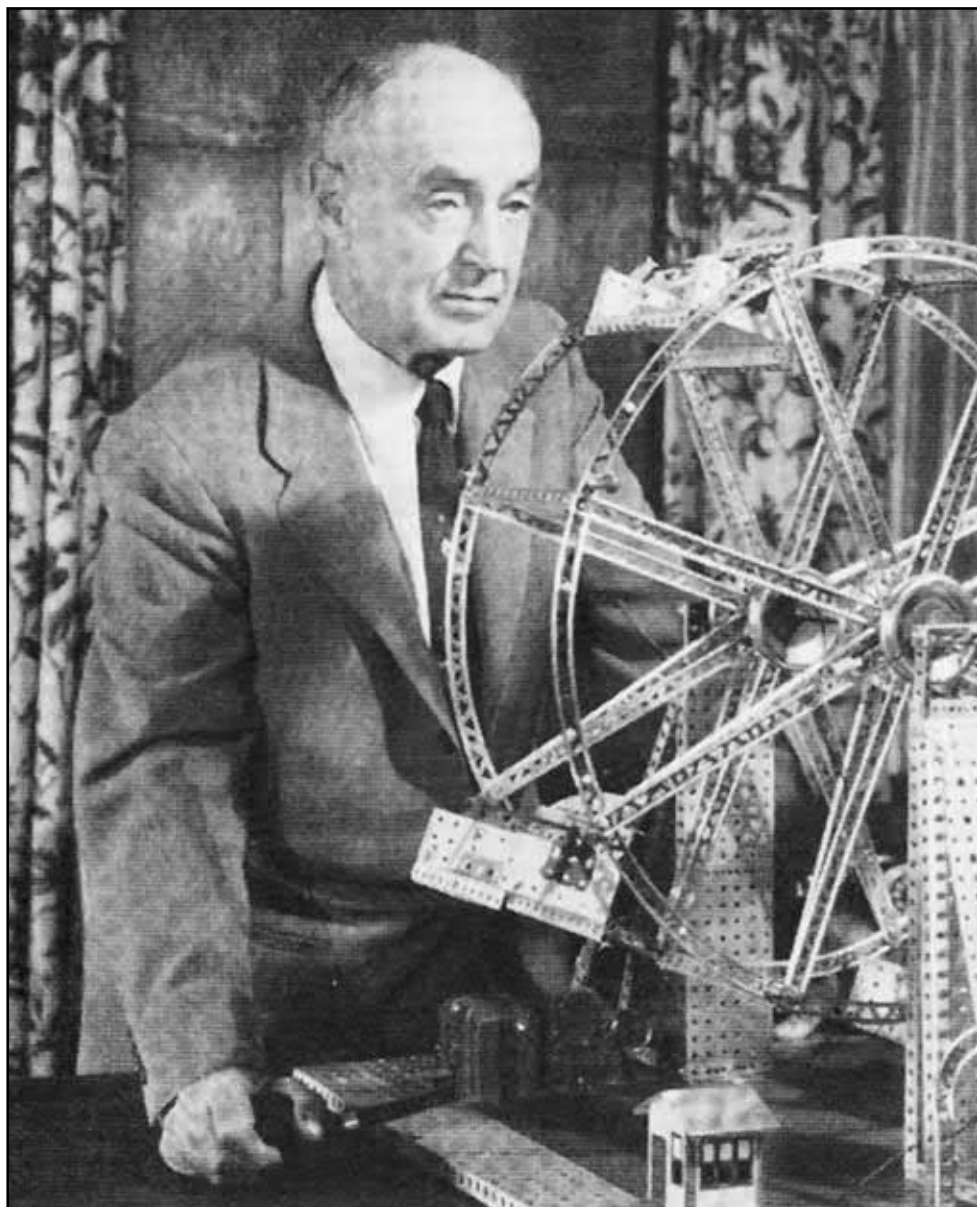
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Genius In Tualatin

The Story of A.C. Gilbert



A. C. Gilbert is probably the most under-acknowledged American figure and is certainly the most under-acknowledged Oregonian. Here was a man who won an Olympic gold medal, held 150 patents, created some of the most well-known American toys, and once even actually saved Christmas, and yet few people know who he was.

Alfred Carlton (or A. C. as he would be known) Gilbert was born on February 15, 1884 in Salem, Oregon. A. C. Gilbert grew up at 700 Marion Street in Salem in a house build by his father Frank Gilbert. A. C. spent many hours playing at his Uncle Andrew T. Gilbert's house, six blocks away on the Salem waterfront. That house is now a part of A. C. Gilbert's Discovery Village.

As a boy, A. C. Gilbert was fascinated by magic and his father

helped him learn how to perform magic tricks. His father took him to see a performance of the famous magician Herman the Great at the Reed Opera House in Salem. During the performance, Herman the Great asked young A. C., "Don't you wish you could do things like this?"

"I can," A. C. replied, and he demonstrated his own magic tricks to the famous magician.

A. C. Gilbert also loved attending athletic events, especially track meets at Willamette University. This interest in athletics led him to organize a small athletic club for his friends. He later persuaded his school to hold a field day of athletic contests. He even made medals for the field day himself using the backs from his father's old watches.

A. C. Gilbert and his family eventually moved to Moscow, Idaho,

where he discovered bag punching, which he quickly became skilled at. A. C. was practicing one day, when the manager of a traveling show spotted him. The manager was impressed with A. C. skill and offered him a job. A. C. took the job and left Moscow with the show, performing as the "Champion Boy Bag Puncher of the World". When A. C.'s father discovered A. C. had left, he went after him, catching up with him in Lewiston, Idaho, and bringing him back to Moscow, ending his bag punching career.

In 1900, A. C. Gilbert returned to Oregon and attended the Tualatin Academy, essentially a private high school operated by Pacific University where his Uncle A. T. Gilbert was a trustee. His interest in athletics continued, and he set the world's record for pull-ups in 1901 and another world's record for the long-jump in 1902. Gilbert graduated from the Tualatin Academy in 1902 and began attending Pacific University, where his athletic success continued. Gilbert was described by the Oregonian as "the best quarterback to be found in Oregon." He was captain of the track team, set a Northwest Conference pole vaulting record of 11'-7", and won the 1904 Intercollegiate Wrestling Championship.

After two years at Pacific University, Gilbert transferred to Yale University to study medicine. To earn money for his tuition, he started performing as a magician, using the magic tricks his father had helped him learn as a child. The performances often earned Gilbert as much as \$100 in a night. His friends became interested in Gilbert's magic tricks, but when he tried to teach them the tricks, he discovered that they weren't willing to spend the time practicing what was needed. At his friends' request, Gilbert began making boxed sets of magic tricks for them, with detailed instructions on how to perform the tricks. The magic sets proved popular enough for Gilbert to be able to sell them for \$5 per set.

In addition to studying medicine, Gilbert continued competing in athletics, winning the Heaton Testimonial Award as all-around champion in 1905. Gilbert also continued pole-vaulting. As a child, Gilbert had invented a take-off hole that allowed him to vault higher than

relying on the 6-inch spike typically used at the time. He continued to experiment and ended up replacing the older hickory pole with one made of bamboo, which was lighter and more flexible, and did splinter if it broke. Using these innovations, Gilbert set a world's record in pole vaulting of 12'-3" in 1906.

The Erector Set would prove to be quite popular. A number of different sets would become available, each one allowing young children to create items like bridges and Ferris wheels.

Confident in his pole vaulting skills, Gilbert set his eyes on competing in the upcoming Olympics. In the Olympic tryouts in 1908, Gilbert set a new record of 12'-7" using his inventions, earning him a spot in the 1908 London Olympic Games. In London, Gilbert won the pole vault using his innovations, but Olympic officials ruled them illegal, despite no actual rules against them. Gilbert vaulted again using the traditional equipment and still won. The judges, however, apparently viewing Gilbert's innovations as attempts to cheat, ruled that Gilbert would share the gold medal with his American teammate, E. T. Cooke, who had matched Gilbert's height in the preliminaries, but fell short in the official vaults. Cooke realized that Gilbert had earned the medal and allowed him to keep it, but the overall experience led Gilbert to stop competing in athletics. However, the bamboo pole and a box similar to Gilbert's soon became standards in pole vaulting.

In 1908, A. C. Gilbert married Mary Thompson, whom he had met while attending Pacific University.

Before graduating from Yale in 1909, Gilbert established his first company, Mysto Manufacturing Company, with his friend John Petrie.



The new company, based in Westville, Connecticut, began manufacturing and marketing of the magic sets Gilbert had created. After graduating from Yale with a medical degree, Gilbert chose to focus on his new company rather than pursue his medical career.

Early in 1911, while riding the train from New Haven, Connecticut to New York City, Gilbert saw the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad erecting towers for new power lines to allow the railroad to switch from steam to electric locomotives. Every day, Gilbert noticed the progress the workers made on the towers, and he found himself fascinated with the architecture of them.

"I saw steel girder after steel girder being erected...I found it interesting to watch their progress from week to week, and most other travelers did too. It seems to be the most natural thing in the world that I should think about how fascinated boys might be in building things out of girders."

Inspired, Gilbert and his wife spent a night making cardboard girders and working with them until they fit together like the girders he had seen on the railroad towers. As they worked with the girders, they found they could make many things with them. These cardboard girders evolved into the Erector Set, which Gilbert introduced at the New York City Toy Fair in 1913.

The Erector Set would prove to be quite popular. A number of different sets would become available, each one allowing young children to create items like bridges and Ferris wheels.

Gilbert's toys change the toy industry.

Gilbert was one of the first makers of educational toys with the belief that playing was an essential part of learning.

Gilbert continued to innovate with new technology as well. A major breakthrough came in 1916, when Gilbert successfully used enameled wire to create small, fractional

horsepower electric motors, something that had eluded even the engineers at industrial giant General Electric. Gilbert planned to add the motors to Erector sets, but they would prove useful in another way as well.

By this time, Gilbert's company had a large number of employees, and Gilbert believed in paying them well in order to maintain a loyal, skilled workforce. The toy industry was seasonal though with a buildup to the Christmas season, and there was always a decline in production during part of the year. Gilbert hated to have to lay off his workers during this time and was searching for a product that was not toy related that could be produced when toys weren't being made.

"Ninety per cent of our toys were sold at Christmas time. Then there was a period of at least a few weeks before we could start production of the next year's merchandise. I had several hundred workers by this time, and I hated terribly to have to lay them off for this period. I hated to see a factory standing idle, machines quiet and unproductive. I wanted to build up a working force that would be loyal, happy, and interested in the business. Men and women could not feel that way unless they had the security of steady employment as well as good wages and pleasant working conditions."

I had to find some product that would fill in the gap in the working year, when we were not making toys. Naturally, something involving small electric motors came to mind first. That's when I had the idea for the Polar Cub fan."

-A.C. Gilbert

The Polar Cub fan used Gilbert's new electric motor and small circuitry, another Gilbert innovation. From the Polar Cub fan came many of the small appliances we take for granted today. Many appliances, such as the electric hair dryer, were made possible through patents held by A. C. Gilbert.

Also in 1916, the Mysto Manufacturing Company was renamed the A. C. Gilbert Company. A. C. Gilbert also founded the Toy Manufacturers of the U.S.A. and was the organization's first president.

In 1917, the A. C. Gilbert Company opened the world's largest toy factory at Erector Square in New Haven, Connecticut. Gilbert also marketed a chemistry set for the first time in 1917. The chemistry set resembled the magic

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When it comes to whiling away a rainy day here in the Valley, there's no shortage of things you can do...here's our top ten.

TOP 10

Valley Destinations to Lose The Winter Blues

In 1958, rock 'n' roll pioneer Eddie Cochran sang, "There ain't no cure for the summertime blues." Once early November rolls around, valley dwellers likely have little sympathy for that idea. For locals, a return to prolonged, dry daylight must be viewed through a lens of wind-whipped, leaf-churning downpours—or at least drizzle. By mid-February, the summertime blues can sound pretty good.

Even so, there's no shortage of things to do during a Willamette Valley winter. Some people move indoors; others enjoy the challenge of embracing the elements. Here are 10 suggestions for those looking for a way to occupy their time here at home in the valley during the winter months. Hopefully these suggestions will convince you to put a different spin on what you already know and try something new. And if they encourage you to compile a "Top Ten Things to Do" resource kit of your own, consider adding a few of these items to it - then let us hear about it.

Go by Train:

When you couldn't get away, it used to be a good (and cheap) time to make a bag of popcorn, head to the terminal at Portland International Airport, and watch the planes arrive and depart. Security realities no longer make that possible, but as anyone who lives in the valley knows, we have our own "low-fi" offering—the trains.

The railways offer numerous chances each day to slow down and dream. Pack a lunch, take a book (or a date), and find a place to park or stand under shelter while waiting for the next frequent pass. One of my favorite spots is the historic Salem Railroad Station, located at the Mission Street off ramp to SE 12th Street. Amtrak passes here three times



in each direction daily, and freight trains - while random - are regular. If the weather is decent, you might also try right across the street at the Mission Mill Museum. Open Monday through Saturday, it offers picnic tables, benches by the Mill Race, and beautiful grounds for lingering. Inside, there's the museum itself - a testament to Salem's industrial past - along with several small shops (www.missionmill.org).

For the Birds:

If feathered arrivals and departures are more to your liking, check out Baskett Slough National Wildlife Refuge. This almost 2,500-acre preserve is operated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Set up as a winter habitat for dusky Canada geese, Baskett Slough boasts numerous other bird species, including Bald eagles. Birds aren't all you'll see;

mammals, reptiles and amphibians also call the preserve home. Baskett Slough is located about 15 minutes west of Salem. A wildlife viewing area is located about 2.5 miles west of Rickreall on Hwy. 22. There is no admission fee (www.fws.gov/WillametteValley/basket).

Take a Walk:

Rain or shine, the Willamette Valley's variety of trails, hikes and urban walks offer benefits to pedestrians of all types. They're free, great exercise, and never the same twice. One of my favorites is the trek from the University of Oregon campus in Eugene across the Willamette River to Autzen Stadium via the Autzen pedestrian/bike bridge (an easy walk that can be extended by adding pieces of Pre's Trail). Seek out Portland's Eastside Esplanade, which again traverses the Willamette before

looping back to the east side of the city (and has many offshoots on either bank). Or try McDonald Research Forest in and outside Corvallis with moderate to difficult terrain, depending on the trail. Trail maps for this last adventure are available for purchase at the OSU Bookstore and most outdoor recreation stores in the Corvallis area. Take hiking boots, rain gear and a few snacks, as you'll be leaving urban life for a while (www.cof.orst.edu/cf/recreation).

Drink a Cup:

Coffee consumption is a Northwest pastime, no secret there. If you want a hands-down great cuppa joe, veer away from the chains and visit a Willamette Valley independent coffee house. Allann Bros Beanery shops are consistently good, and they frequently offer entertainment during weekend evenings. They have locations in Eugene, Corvallis, Albany and Salem (www.allannbroscffee.com).

My favorite spot, however, is Governor's Cup Coffee Roasters in Downtown Salem. The proprietor of this one-off shop roasts on the premises. If you love the smell of roasting coffee, this isn't to be missed—you can literally taste it blocks away. The vibe here is very low-key and multi-purpose: students, local business people, city, state and Capitol employees, wi-fi users, Capitol employees and coffee enthusiasts of all stripes mix easily in this decidedly non-snooty space. The coffee is strong enough to reinvigorate your most lethargic winter's day. Get it by the cup or the pound (471 Court St. NE, Salem).

Not Just for Popeye Anymore:

Award-winning wine is another well-known attribute of the Willamette Valley. Tours and tastings are available year-round. If wine interests you, but you haven't taken a tour of some kind yet, you really should.

Here's something you may not know - the Willamette Valley is home to the first commercial olive oil production facility in Oregon. Olive growing in Oregon? You bet. Located on Hwy. 99 between Dundee and Lafayette, Red Ridge Farms maintains about 15 acres of olive trees. They began harvesting olives for olive oil production in 2005. Each November, they host "Olio Nuovo Festa" ("New Olive Oil Celebration"), during which the public can come to the farm, view the pressing process, tour their facility, and taste their work. Red Ridge Farms maintains one of two state-of-the-art

Italian olive presses on the West Coast, the other being near Davis, California. During the winter, the facility reduces its hours, but Red Ridge Farms is still open for tastings of its three fresh oil varieties with warm bruschetta. You'll need to call ahead to schedule a time.

One other item of note: the olive pressing is only one part of Red Ridge Farms' operation. They also operate Durant Vineyards (since 1973) and a plant nursery. In addition to their retail shop, they have both an event facility and a guest suite. The guest suite is located among four acres of landscaped gardens, has great views of the valley, and sleeps two. It's available any time of year and is a great valley get-away (www.redridgefarms.com).

Some Historical Perspective:

Every town and city in the valley can claim great restaurants, eateries and bakeries. For an extra helping of "valley authentic," take the Corvallis exit on I-5 and drive east on Hwy. 34. After about 2.5 miles, turn right and follow the signs to the town of Brownsville.

Initially a settlement that preceded Oregon statehood by 13 years, Brownsville is small town life in the Willamette Valley, preserving the best of what was (the architecture, landscape and pace) while successfully moving small-town community life into the present. The town holds the Linn County Historical Museum, and those interested in the valley's past can (and should) tour the gorgeous Moyer House. Visitors will find art galleries, antique shops and a walking tour. Notably, the town played host to the making of the film "Stand By Me."

But back to the restaurants. Brownsville's edible options cover every meal time (and anything in between) and run the gamut from fine dining to "I-just-rolled-out-of-bed." For one of the best homemade cinnamon rolls you'll ever try, stop at Main Street Coffee. The baked goods at Bella Cuccina are equally irresistible. Brownsville's a small town with a big past (www.brownsvilleoregon.org).

The Art of the Valley:

Because you don't need a sunny day to create, the visual arts enjoy great health hereabouts. Appreciate (and, if you desire, purchase) what you see or make it yourself. For a broad sampling of local, regional and international artists' work, any winter day is a fine

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

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Dedication the Common Link Between Artisan Cheese Makers

Question: What do Alpine and Nubian goats, East Friesian sheep and Jersey cows have in common?

Answer: They produce the milk that is the fuel for Oregon's artisan cheese engine, which is getting up to speed after several years at a low idle.

Automotive metaphors aside, three Willamette Valley artisan (craft) cheese producers represent different levels of the newest agricultural business sector in Oregon.

Ancient Heritage Dairy of Scio (sheep) and Fraga Farm Organic Goat Cheese of Sweet Home are "farmstead" producers — they own their own animals and create their cheeses on-site.

Oregon Gourmet Cheeses gets its milk from a single Jersey herd in Scio, but creates its products at a 4,500-square-foot facility in downtown Albany.

Milking at least twice per day with only two or three people to run each operation, the going is hard for those who want to make and sell "gourmet" European-style cheeses to ever more discerning buyers.

"We're trying to make what we make very well, but we don't make a ton of it," Paul Obringer of Ancient Heritage Dairy said. "Two years ago (the dairy's first year of operation) was tight, this year we might break even, and next year we might make a bit of money."

He said cows milk about 4 to 6 gallons per day, while sheep average only about a half-gallon: "There's your challenge right there," he said, adding that most operations like his have to milk about 65 to 85 sheep to make the business self-sustaining.

Obringer and his wife, Kathy, moved from their 20-acre farm in Estacada a few years ago to their Scio property, which had been a dairy.

"The investment in equipment and buildings is significant," Paul Obringer said. "It was going to cost far too much to build in Estacada."

Kathy makes cheese once each day — feta, raw-milk cheese, blue cheese, a sheep/cow milk blend cheese or a specialty cheese.

Both say the biggest costs involved in the enterprise are in the cutting, weighing, labeling and distribution tasks, and they sell to a number of farmer's markets and retail stores in the Portland-to-Eugene area.



Paul and Kathy Obringer watch over their herd of East Friesian sheep at Ancient Heritage Dairy in Scio.

Brian Richter, general manager of Oregon Gourmet Cheeses, notes on the company's web site that "a cheese making revolution...led by people not content with bland, mediocre, mass-produced cheese" is what his company — and the others — are all about.

A founding member of the nascent Oregon Cheese Guild (to which all three businesses belong), Richter says his small company is determined to help provide Oregon with "better, more flavorsome cheese."

"I learned the hand-crafted, old-world art form of making cheese from a 'true master' in Australia," he said.

The enterprise currently sells to farmer's markets, a few retail stores and through a Portland distributor.

Richter agreed that having financial success in the field is still an uphill climb: "These are not mass-production methods (the company sells soft, fresh cheeses in several flavors, soft-ripened Camembert-style cheeses and a French-style, washed-rind, cheddar-style cheese), but things are looking very good for us."

Larry and Janice Neilson's Fraga Farm produces chevré, farmhouse, "goatzarella," feta and cheddar cheeses from their 50-head flock of Alpine and



Larry and Janice Neilson and some of their 50-head flock of Alpine and Nubian Goats at Fraga Farm in Sweet Home.

Nubian goats, peddling them up and down the Willamette Valley corridor and to Texas, Washington and along the Pacific Coast.

Theirs is Oregon's only certified organic dairy of its kind, and creating their organic products is an enjoyable endeavor to them, they say. Sales are "paying the bills, and we're making a small profit now," Larry Neilson said. But it's time-consuming and backbreaking work, with only them and one "intern" to do everything from milking to packaging and delivery.

"The call for our cheeses is really growing," he added, "but it would be nice to be able to get away now and then for a vacation."

Survival is the first order of business, then, for these cutting-edge Oregon cheese makers. Expectations are measured by the ratio of effort

to consumer satisfaction, and the willingness of those consumers to pay a bit more for flavor and uniqueness.

"All we want to do is support the farm and our family," said Paul Obringer. "There's a lot of challenges ahead of us, but you have to be committed and love what you do."

Geoff Parks is a longtime resident of Salem who has been a writer and photographer since first being introduced to the journalistic world at the age of 13 at Waldo Junior High School's student newspaper, the *Waldo World*. He has worked as a newspaper writer/photographer in Salem (the *Statesman Journal*, the *Capital Press*, the *Ag Newspaper*, the *Community Press*, the *Salem Monthly*); in the Portland area (the *Oregonian*, the *Beaverton Times*, the *Oregon Business Journal*); in Eugene (the *Eugene Register-Guard*, the *University of Oregon Daily Emerald*), and for various magazines (*Northwest Travel*, *Business-2-Business*, *PC World*, *Crop Protection Management Magazine*).

PHOTOGRAPHS BY GEOFF PARKS

“...there’s no shortage of things to do during a Willamette Valley winter. Some people move indoors; others enjoy the challenge of embracing the elements. “

one to check out the galleries of the Salem Art Association (<http://salemart.org>). Located within Salem’s historic Bush’s Pasture Park, each of the three galleries at the Bush Barn Art Center houses art created by artists of different locations. If Willamette Valley art is what you’re after, you’ll find the work of artists from Salem and nearby in the SAA’s Focus Gallery. The galleries are closed Mondays.

Now, if you would rather do the creating yourself, the Maude Kerns Art Center presents another option. Just beyond the U of O campus in Eugene, this nonprofit community center offers classes in many visual media to any and all: kids and adults; novice to advanced; members and nonmembers (members paying less for the courses, of course). MKAC has hours Monday through Saturday (www.mkartcentr.org).

Feel Free to Drool:

If you love musical instruments - and equally love hunting for rare and unusual ones, especially guitars - come in out of the elements at McKenzie River Music in Eugene. While most instruments aren’t cheap, there are some bargains, and guitar players’ eyes will pop out of their heads (455 W. 11th, Eugene, www.mckenzievermusic.com).

By the Book:

As with coffee, wine (and beer) and precipitation, Oregon is on the map for its bookstores. Again, I’m not thinking about the chains here. And while a certain giant, independent bookstore-of-note in the City of Roses garners much-deserved praise as both a Mecca and candy store for readers year-round, the valley south of Portland holds its fair share of indies worthy of “a day well spent.”

Hunting for a keeper is especially rewarding in a navigable shop where local employees make it their business to know their stock extremely well. My favorite hunting ground is The Book Bin, with locations in both Corvallis and Salem (www.bookbin.com). Smith Family Bookstore, with

two shops in Eugene, presents another solid pair of browsing options. And let’s not overlook Portland altogether. Maybe you’re not even going to be near the city, but if you’re searching for rare or used books in particular, nobody on the planet is more knowledgeable than Phil Wikelund at Great Northwest Bookstore. Check out what he can find for you at www.greatnorthwestbooks.com.

At Play:

Larger towns in the valley offer quality community theater - polished productions, talented actors, enjoyable evenings. Each troupe invests much time and attention into giving the audience a memorable performance. Noted community theater groups include Albany Civic Theater (<http://albanycivic.org>), Corvallis Community Theater (www.corvalliscommunitytheatre.org), and Salem’s Pentacle Theater (www.pentacletheatre.org). For something a bit different, but every bit as fun, check out the Brush Creek Players, who perform, aptly enough, in the Brush Creek Playhouse, a former one-room schoolhouse just west of Silverton, Oregon. Their musical productions, often including local students, are an especially good time (www.brushcreekplayhouse.org). Whether an old favorite, arty obscurity, or well-known current-day piece, you won’t be sorry when taking in “a night at the theater.”

If All Else Fails:

There’s nothing like watching a winter storm at the beach: alone, or with friends; from a restaurant, motel or wayside; for the day or for a week. While it isn’t technically within “the valley,” a beach storm is within striking distance of any valley town or city. And when you’re done, you can be back to pursue the next item on your wintertime “to do” list before you know it.

Loren Depping lives and writes in the Willamette Valley.

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Long Live Oregon BBQ!

One of my favorite hobbies is barbecuing and grilling outdoors. I think of it as an extension on my kitchen.

Our Oregon winters sometimes make it inconvenient to get outside and grill. Yes, it can be cold and rainy! Many folks simply store their grills in the winter. But don't just stash your grill away! Use your grill as much as you can and watch for those occasional breaks in the weather. Your grilling and barbecuing skills will benefit from all the practice.

I attended a barbecue class where someone mentioned that Oregon was a "non-barbecue state." No one disagreed at the time, and most people will agree that Oregon is not the "Barbecue Capital" of the world. But that statement has

bugged me ever since I heard it. How is Oregon a non-barbecue state? Does that mean that no one has a barbecue grill or that no one in Oregon can barbecue worth a hoot?

I did a little research on the whole barbecue thing. I discovered that there are fourteen central or core barbecue states mostly located in the southeastern part of the US. Most of our barbecue traditions and culture come from this region.

But the popularity of barbecuing has spread to other states. So saying that Oregon or any other state is a "non-barbecue states" is not very accurate. Believe me, there is plenty of quality barbecuing and grilling going on in our state - has been for some time!

Barbecuing meat involves cooking the meat for a long period



of time at a low temperature over a wood fire. Most people use real wood, charcoal, wood pellets or briquettes to add a smoky taste.

But how are you supposed to add a smoky flavor to your food if you have a gas grill? Check out my blog for some tips and tricks: www.barbecuegrillsplus.blogspot.com/2009/01/brinkmann-water-pans-and-grills.html

I am not a barbecue purist. I spend a lot of time grilling veggies and fruit, and I really enjoy it! So, put the barbecue rules to the

side and investigate the world of barbecuing and grilling. There are many folks out there eager to enjoy your creations.

Thom Richards loves to barbecue and grill. He does it all year around, even when the Oregon weather is mean and nasty. You can reach Thom and get further information through his blog, "BBQ'ing Tips From Deep In The Heart Of Oregon" www.barbecuegrillsplus.blogspot.com. Follow him on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/BarbecueGrills>.

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

sets and would become one of the company's major products.

In 1917, the United States officially entered World War I, and the U.S. Council of National Defense began considering a ban on Christmas toys so that people would be able to buy more war bonds. A. C. Gilbert believed toys were too important to give up, both for educating children and for overall morale. The Toy Manufacturers of the U.S.A. appointed Gilbert to convince the council, made up of the Secretary of the Navy, the Secretary of Commerce, the Secretary of War and the Secretary of the Interior. Knowing he would only have a few minutes at the end of the day to convince the council, Gilbert brought some of his company's toys along to help make his point. Shortly after passing around the toys in the meeting, the men were on the floor playing with them. The meeting ran past the scheduled time... to three hours. In the end, the council decided against banning Christmas toys, and Gilbert let the men keep the toys he brought to the meeting. A. C. Gilbert was praised by the press as "The Man Who Saved Christmas."

Harriet Baskas recounted this story on National Public Radio's "All Things Considered" on December 25, 1998.

Another product made by Gilbert was radio kits. In 1920, the A. C. Gilbert Co. was issued a radio broadcasting license. Gilbert's radio station, WCJ in New Haven, Connecticut, was the 6th licensed radio station in the United States. Gilbert Radio Press broadcasts included a sports review program hosted by Gilbert himself, as well as interviews with famous athletes of the time. A. C. Gilbert's sports program was *the* first radio sports program.

The A. C. Gilbert Company introduced a microscope set in 1935. The Gilbert microscope set was the most realistic microscope set available at the time and remained an important product in Gilbert's toy line.

In 1938, Gilbert purchased American Flyer Trains from W. O. Coleman, Jr. and moved all American Flyer production and staff to the Gilbert factory. Under Coleman, American Flyer had suffered with tinplate trains that were not to scale and were no different from any of its competitors. Gilbert began to replace the original American Flyer tinplate trains with new, more realistic, stamped metal and die cast bodies designed to 1/64th (3/16") scale, though they still ran on O-scale (1/48th or 1/4") track. A. C. Gilbert believed that the trains should be as realistic as possible, and the new American Flyer trains were modeled

from actual railroad blueprints, an innovation at the time. Gilbert was also a pioneer of 1/87th scale trains, with its "Gilbert HO" line introduced at this time.

The Gilbert Hall of Science opened in New York City in 1941 with 1500 children as guests. Toys made by Gilbert would be advertised as being "Developed at the Gilbert Hall of Science."

Also in 1941, A. C. Gilbert's childhood home in Salem, Oregon was demolished to make way for the Salem First Congregational Church. His uncle's house remained on the Salem waterfront.

World War II interfered with Gilbert's toy production, and in 1942, the A.C. Gilbert Company switched from toy production to military production. War products made by Gilbert included flares, mines, range indicators for anti-aircraft guns, and electric motors for the trim tabs of fighter planes. The company received an Army-Navy "E" award in 1943 for its contributions to the war effort. It was the first of four of the awards the company would receive during the course of the war.

During the war, the Erector Set was used to design and test a portable bridge, which would go on to be used by Allied soldiers in Europe. The bridge could be carried by soldiers in 10-foot sections and used to replace bridges destroyed by the Germans army as they retreated across Europe.

Gilbert's toys would also contribute to the war in another way. As the popularity of the Erector Set had grown over the years, it was used by architects and engineers to build test models of structures and machines. During the war, the Erector Set was used to design and test a portable bridge, which would go on to be used by Allied soldiers in Europe. The bridge could be carried by soldiers in 10-foot sections and used to replace bridges destroyed by the Germans army as they retreated across Europe.

When the war ended, A. C. Gilbert was able to return to toy production and finish remaking the American Flyer Trains. In 1946, American Flyer introduced S gauge trains on S-gauge 2-rail track. This made American Flyer distinct from its competitors. Other toy trains had to be compressed in length to be able to go around the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

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Willamette Valley Winery Embodies OR Role in ORganic

Being a recent transplant from northeastern Ohio the cross country drive allowed me to take note of the environmental efforts that our country is adopting. From wind power to grain being used as fuel you see developments for this movement in many states. Especially prevalent here in the Willamette Valley, home of America's "greenest city," the wine world is not to be excluded. Cooper Mountain Vineyards is doing their part to make sure of that.

In the wine industry there is a growing segment of producers who follow organic practices. This includes growing grapes organically without chemical fertilizer or pesticides, producing organic wines that do not contain added preservatives, or practicing alternative methods like Biodynamics. This last approach treats the vineyard as a self-sustaining, living organism. Cooper Mountain's efforts in this field have helped them become a leading producer of organic and Biodynamic wines.

Owner Dr. Robert Gross has applied his theory of holistic medicine to the viticulture and vinification practices at Cooper Mountain. Starting off by producing wines from organically grown grapes in 1992, removing chemicals from the growing process, the winery was the second in the state to receive their organic certification in 1995. Later they were the first winery in the Pacific Northwest to be certified as Biodynamic. Steps toward creating healthier vineyards allows them to produce "authentic wines." Offering Pinot Noir, Gris, and Blanc and Chardonnay here are tasting notes from several of their current wines.

2007 Pinot Gris, 20th Anniversary Reserve: Clear, pale, golden yellow color; Clean nose with medium intensity aromas of pear, golden apple, fresh flowers, honey, and applesauce; Dry, medium body and acidity with softer flavors of kiwi, apple, pineapple, yellow cherries, citrus, and melon. (Organically grown, Biodynamic grapes)

2007 Pinot Noir, 20th Anniversary Reserve: Clear, pale to medium, ruby



Cooper Mountain's vortex flow form which is used in their Biodynamic vineyard practices.

red color; Clean nose with medium intensity aromas of black cherry, soft pepper, cranberry, dill, vegetation, and violet; Dry with medium body and acidity, soft medium-low tannins and flavors of tart cherry, raspberry, strawberry, red fruit, and mushroom. (Organically grown, Biodynamic grapes)

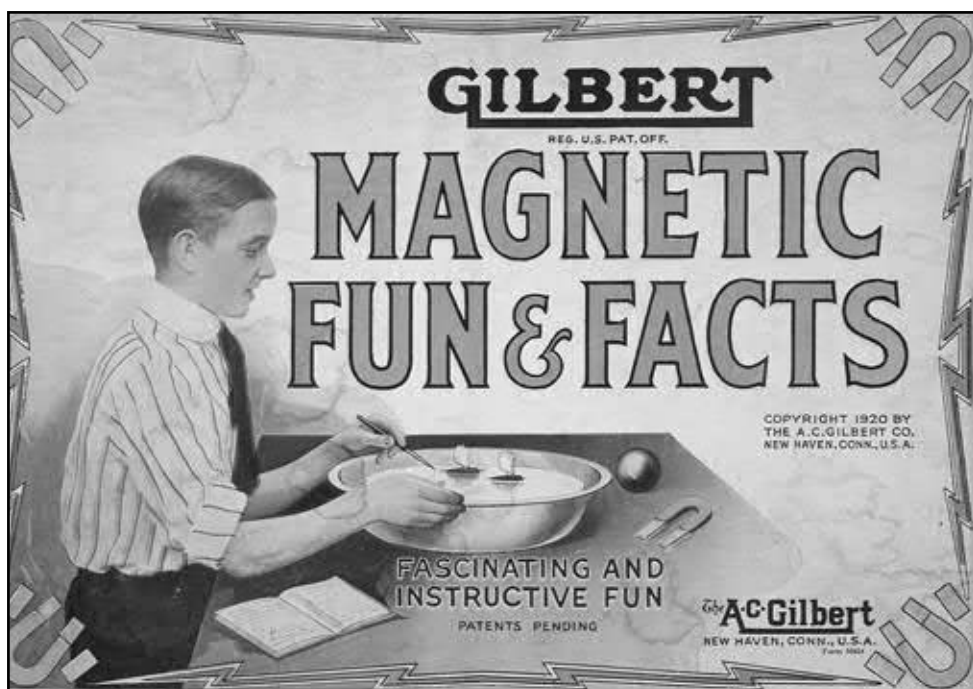
2007 Pinot Noir, 5 Element Series, Mountain Terroir: Clear, medium, ruby red color; Clean nose with fuller intensity aromas of mushroom, mineral, granite, loam, blackberry, plum, and raspberry; Dry with medium body and acidity, round medium tannins and flavors of cherry, oak, red raspberry, soft vegetation. (Biodynamic wine)

The 2007 vintage was troubled by unexpected rains late in the growing season, and sugar levels that did not reach expectations. Whether or not the organic and Biodynamic practices at Cooper Mountain helped them to produce higher quality wines from grapes that may have been less than desirable remains to be seen by comparing bottles from other vintages. However, it is arguable that these practices did help them to achieve the best representation of fruit harvested that season. And this is what Cooper Mountain strives to do with their wines, promoting healthier vineyards to achieve authenticity in the bottle.

While exploring all the Willamette Valley has to offer, be sure to visit Cooper Mountain Vineyards at 9480

SW Grabhorn Road in Beaverton. Tasting room hours are 12p-5p seven days a week. You can learn more at www.coopermountainwine.com or read their blog at www.pinotblog.com. Call the winery at (503) 649-0027 for further information. Cheers!

Ryan Reichert is originally from Northeast Ohio and recently relocated to the Willamette Valley to further his career in the wine industry. He has received both his Intermediate and Advanced certifications from the Wine & Spirits Education Trust, and is also a certified French wine enthusiast and Spanish Wine Educator. Ryan strives to learn all he can about wine and to share his passion with everyone. You can read more of Ryan's work at <http://www.oeno-phil.com> where he posts about many wine related topics.



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

sharp corners, but the slightly smaller American Flyer trains could be made full-length, and the two-rail track was far more realistic than the three-rail track used by the competition. Other Gilbert innovations in model trains included the talking station, trains sound systems, and smoke from the smokestack. With these innovations, American Flyer Trains would solidly become the #2 toy trains in America, under the famous Lionel Trains. About a third of all toy trains sold were made by American Flyer. American Flyer Trains eventually accounted for about three-quarters of Gilbert's production.

The A. C. Gilbert Company produced other toys as well including the Erector set, magic sets, chemistry sets, microscopes, a telegraph set, an electricity set, and a weather station. Perhaps Gilbert's most interesting toy was the Atomic Energy set introduced in 1951. The set was built with the aid of professors at MIT and included a working Geiger counter and samples of radioactive material. Parents protested the conceived potential danger of the sets (though the radioactive material was at very low levels) and production stopped in 1952, making the Atomic Energy set one of the most collectible Gilbert toys.

A. C. Gilbert stepped down as president of A. C. Gilbert Company in 1954. His son, A. C. Gilbert, Jr. took over the company. A. C. Gilbert published his autobiography, "The Man Who Lives in Paradise," that same year.

A. C. Gilbert died in 1961. At his death, he held 150 patents for his inventions. Unfortunately, the company that bore his name would not survive without him.

In 1962, with sales declining, the Gilbert family sold the A. C. Gilbert Company to the Wrather Corporation and were no longer involved in

the company. The quality of the products began to decline rapidly. Despite adding products like slot cars and model airplanes, poor sales led to the first financial loss since Great Depression. The A. C. Gilbert Company ended production in 1966 and declared bankruptcy in 1967. The company was liquidated.

The Erector set was sold to Gabriel Industries and are still made to this day by Meccano, a one-time competitor. Meccano was a British company that introduced a toy similar to the Erector set back in 1901. Though they initially competed with each other, in 1930 Gilbert purchased the rights to manufacture Meccano in the United States, an arrangement that lasted until World War II when Meccano exited the U.S. market. Meccano acquired the rights to the Erector name in 1990.

American Flyer trains were sold to Lionel in June 1967. Lionel incorporated some Gilbert's innovations into its existing train line, but did not continue producing the S-gauge trains. It was 1979 before Lionel re-introduced limited production of the American Flyer line for the emerging collector's market. American Flyer trains have remained in production (to various degrees) under Lionel ever since. Some of the dies for the Gilbert HO line were acquired by other manufacturers of HO-scale trains, and a few items are still being produced under various names today. The City of Salem, Oregon purchased the A. T. Gilbert house in 1985. On December 15, 1989, A. C. Gilbert's Discovery Village opened in Salem with the A. T. Gilbert house as part of it.

Robert West lives in Milwaukie, Oregon. Visit his website at <http://myweb.msoe.edu/~westr/index.htm>

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