

"We are extremely fortunate to have a man like Bob Cox, who's himself a very strong train enthusiast and also heavily involved in photography." — Robert Manning, president of the Southwest Rail Passenger Association

All Eyes On: Bob Cox

La Plata resident pursues his passions of photography and railroads

BY ANNE REBAR
Staff Reporter

As a gleaming train rounds the bend and streaks into view, 30 cars carrying train photographers and rail fans drive parallel to it on the highway, accelerating and swerving around each other, jockeying for a position to get that perfect shot. Bob Cox drives two feet behind the car in front of him while his wife Amy snaps away at the locomotive rumbling along out the window.

The first photograph of Bob Cox with a train was taken when he was two months old, and he has had a passion for them since. Cox combines this passion for trains with another favorite past-time: photography. He said he has traveled throughout the country photographing trains.

"The sheer size of being out by the railroads, photographing them — that is just awe-inspiring anyway," Cox said. "Especially when they are going fast. That makes it even better."

Cox moved to La Plata two years ago from Sedalia, Mo., after becoming friends with Tom and Kelly Marshall, owners of the Depot Inn. Cox said he liked the ventures they were working on and decided La Plata was the place to be. After the move, Cox said he went from working at an automotive factory in Sedalia to pursuing a career working with two things he loves: trains and photography.

Cox now works at the Amtrak depot in the mornings and at Trainparty.com in the afternoons, where he helps pack and ship

train-related party supplies for the online store. In the evenings and during weekends, he helps run the Silver Rails Gallery and Show-N-Off Photography and DJ service, which he and his wife own.

"There's never a dull moment," Cox said. "I get very little time to sleep, but I have fun most of my days."

Cox shares his love of trains with his family, building model sets and attending shows with his wife and young daughter. Cox said his wife, whom he met in college in Sedalia, liked trains before they met, but she really got into them after their first date.

"Our first date, I said, 'I'm going to go see a steam engine run, do you want to go?' and of course she had the choice of staying at home or taking a day out with me, so she went with me, and basically it hooked her right then," Cox said. "She gradually got more into it and started learning, and then after we got married our honeymoon was spent on the Southwest Chief. We went to Arizona and the Grand Canyon, so she's hooked for sure now."

Cox is the curator at La Plata's Silver Rails Gallery, run by the American Passenger Rail Heritage Foundation. Cox said the gallery, which opened last Saturday, is unique. It features railroad art in

all different mediums, including some of Cox's own photography, as well as a train-themed library and gift shop.

"The artwork covers from the beginning of railroads all the way up to the present, and there's even a painting depicting the future of railroading," Cox said. "There's also going to be some woodcarvings and some poetry. The gift shop will carry railroad DVD's, postcards and party supplies."

Ultimately, Cox said he hopes to go to local schools and host artwork and pho-

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Bob Cox
Curator of La Plata's Silver Rails Gallery



Mayank Dhungana/Index
La Plata resident Bob Cox shares his love of trains with his wife who really got into them after their first date when he took her to see a steam engine run.

graphy competitions — all railroad related — to get students involved in the gallery as well.

Tom Marshall, owner of the Depot Inn, is working to make La Plata a tourist destination for train enthusiasts, which Cox wanted to be a part of.

"The gallery will do a lot for the community," Marshall said. "There are millions of people who are into railroad heritage, and this gallery, which is unique, will bring

in many tourists."

Robert Manning, president of the Southwest Rail Passenger Association, came to watch the progress of the gallery as it was being assembled. He said Cox is a natural fit to run the gallery.

"We are extremely fortunate to have a man like Bob Cox, who's himself a very strong train enthusiast and also heavily involved in photography," Manning said.

Local nurse embarks on walk of healing

BY BETHANY COURY
Staff Reporter

Local nurse Shira Granote will begin today a 200-mile walking trek through the state of Missouri with the purpose of addressing health care in a more holistic way and offering her services to the communities she passes through.

She plans to start the walk of healing at 9 a.m. in La Plata at the Possibility Alliance, a homestead that lives simply and practices service to its community. She plans to pass through Kirksville within the first two days and finish in Kansas City, Mo., within 10 to 12 days. Even more than her medical services, she plans to use art as a means of healing as she meets the people, sees their needs and attends to them to the best of her abilities.

"We're just going to go into communities and ask if there's things we can help out with," Granote said. "Maybe doing some yoga classes, maybe some healing circles, maybe some music and dance."

Although she came up with the

idea of a healing walk on her own, she won't be alone. Her partner, Joshua Duncan, is a healer with gems and stones and will offer services to the

communities they pass through by way of therapeutic touch, an energy healing. They had been planning to open up a healing center in the United States but have put that on hold for now. Granote said

Duncan's participation in the walk of healing offered her the assurance of having someone to do the entire walk of healing with her. There are several others committed to start the walk with her at the Possibility Alliance, but she does not know how far they'll go yet. Granote and Duncan are hop-

ing that people will join them as they pass through their towns.

Granote said the inspiration for this walk, unprecedented in her experience, was her own life's journey, which left her with a message of hope to give.

"The inspiration was, I guess, my own journey of finding my own healing path," Granote said. "And I wanted to just spread the message that anything is possible. ... It doesn't matter what it is, healing or business endeavors or friendships or partners."

Granote's funds are coming out of her own pocket at this point. She doesn't plan to stay in hotels but counts on the kindness of the towns-

folk to respond with hospitality by lending them a couch or even a yard to sleep on. She also isn't anticipating having to provide much food. Rather, she is leaving it up to the communities to host dinners or provide donations. Most monetary donations, however, will be used for the people they meet.

Granote said they are collecting money as they walk for healing. She said that if people feel inspired to write a check or give them money, they can lend financial support to some of the people they encounter. She said maybe the money can go toward providing assistance for covering charges at the dentists, or something for their physical health.

Granote's Web site, <http://wakeuphealwalk.weebly.com>, provides an outlet for people wanting to join the walk, support her or donate to the cause.

"We're just hoping to be honest and open with people and see how people respond and see what comes back for what we give out," Granote said.

Ethan Hughes, founder of the Possibility Alliance, first met Granote when she came to visit for a few days in the summer of 2009 to see their educational center. He said he's planning to assist bicyclists during the opening day and possibly with following ones, help with food and host an open-end walk. He wants to have a lot of people from the community come for a send-off.

"I think it's wonderful to see nurses like herself just go out to heal people, not waiting for a political decision," Hughes said. "[I'm] 100 percent behind it and wanted to make it happen however we could."

Hughes said he thinks this walk will be an invitation for people to take action. He said she'll be able not only to heal people but also inspire them not to wait for someone else to start helping other people.

"I've seen amazing movements happen from when people just ... start creating the world they want to see," Hughes said.

"I think it's wonderful to see nurses like herself just go out to heal people, not waiting for a political decision. [I'm] 100 percent behind it and wanted to make it happen however we could."

Ethan Hughes
Founder of the Possibility Alliance



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I am a 30-year Truman employee and I am respectfully asking the students, staff, and faculty for their vote on April 6. Thank you.

Paid for by Mona Davis, Candidate for School Board