

## *I LOST IT!*

By Dale A. Olson

Yes, those that know me would say "Dale, you lost it years ago". Well, that might be so, but this isn't that kind of lost I'm talking about and it isn't about being lost either.

I'm talking about losing things. Do others have this problem? I hope so, 'cause I don't want to think I'm alone in this department.

I seem to have a problem holding on to water bottles. Fortunately they were just the bottled water type, but usually full or nearly so. I think I have several of these hiding along the trail probably in amongst some bushes never to be seen again. I sadly watched one fall in the creek only to happily bob up and down just out of my reach as I attempted to rescue it while nearly drowning myself.

This fall, another water bottle escaped from my jacket pocket while hiking and climbing up some steep mountain side. I retraced my tracks on the way down. The bottle had mysteriously hidden itself from my view.

On another occasion I was riding with some friends when at the end of the ride, one of them came up to me with my water bottle. Guess it escaped somehow from my saddle bag. Suppose that's why they put tie down straps on them.

A couple of years ago, my son had just bought a new can of bear spray. We threw our backpacks on and began a day hike. After several miles of hiking, we stopped for lunch. My son started digging around in his backpack frantically looking for something. I asked him what the problem was. He told me he couldn't find his bear spray. Search as much as we could, it was nowhere to be found. On our return, we searched our back trail with no success. Upon returning back to the vehicle, no luck. It was determined that somehow it slipped out of his backpack shortly after the beginning of the hike and someone came along, spied it and picked it up. I bet they were happy.

I had a neat little flashlight that I would wrap up in my sleeping bag. I know that when we broke camp in the morning that we, like all good campers, policed the area before we left. That poor little flashlight was never to be seen by me again. I sure hope it has a good home. I think my biggest loss, though, was the loss of a great little folding saw. Only thing I can figure, is that when I pulled my lunch out from my saddle bag the saw must have taken a ride. Once again, I rode back on the trail several months later but to no avail. Lost and gone forever, or did someone find it and take it home with them?

Oh, but the tide turned this summer. While riding along on a quite popular trail, I spied there laying on the trail a brand new can of bear spray! Yippee! Well, I really didn't need it at the time, but my son sure felt reimbursed.

Now I have found water bottles that were full, an elk bugle, a hatchet, and two hunting knives on different occasions and I'm sure a variety of other objects that I have forgotten about lying along the trail. I used to think that people were awfully careless or they were just plain littering.

What I have found after so many of my own experiences losing things, is that things seem to have a knack for escaping one's person in the most secretive way. My wife relates it to the missing socks in the dryer, but I'm convinced it's the little mountain people that snatch them away from you when you're not looking!

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