

SCA student honored for essay

By **Jim Cornelius**
News Editor

Meri Blaser is the recipient of a Patriot’s Pen Award from the local chapter of Veterans of Foreign Wars for her essay on the topic “What Freedom Means To Me.” (*See sidebar, to right, for text.*)

Bill Anttila, Earl Schroeder, and John Miller of VFW presented the award to the Sisters Christian Academy (SCA) student last week. Anttila noted that this is the first time he had presented the award to a private-school student.

In addition, VFW honored SCA middle school teacher Randy Muir for his teaching of history and citizenship.



Bill Anttila, Earl Schroeder, and John Miller congratulated Meri Blaser.

VFW District 10 Commander Jack Newcomb was on hand for the presentation, which was held in the gymnasium at Sisters Christian Academy.

Oregon snowpack holding strong

In most basins across the state, Oregon’s mountain snowpack remains at near normal to above-normal levels and continues to surpass last year’s peak levels, according to the March Water Supply Outlook Report released today by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Today’s statewide average snowpack is 92 percent of normal.

Portions of eastern Oregon are experiencing the highest snowpack levels due to above-normal precipitation that fell as snow throughout January. Additionally, cooler temperatures at higher elevations have retained the snowpack from earlier in the season.

In western Oregon, snowpack is the lowest in the state in the Mt. Hood and Willamette Basins, at 77 percent and 76 percent, respectively.

February was very warm, with above-normal temperatures statewide.

Most basins experienced some mid- and low-elevation snowmelt during warmer periods in the middle of the month. Higher elevations

continued to gain snow during February and are retaining the snow for now. As the spring weather approaches, warmer temperatures and rain-on-snow events could result in significant snowmelt run-off.

“Temperature will be the key indicator for March snowpack development and retention... — Scott Oviatt

“Temperature will be the key indicator for March snowpack development and retention, since warmer conditions have already resulted

in low- and mid-elevation snowmelt run-off in several locations,” said Scott Oviatt, NRCS Oregon snow survey supervisor. “Eastern Oregon continues to see the best conditions in the state, due to cooler mountain temperatures.”

According to the March report, streamflow forecasts call for slightly-below-average to slightly above-average volumes for the summer water supply season. Southeastern Oregon has some forecast points well above average, however the highest forecasts are for the Deschutes and Crooked Rivers. However, hydrologists continue to caution that if current warm conditions persist, summer projections are likely to change.

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What Freedom Means To Me

By **America Blaser**
Student at Sisters Christian Academy

Every day people in America take freedom for granted. We often don’t realize the fight that was put up for our freedom. There are many days that pass without realizing the sacrifice that men and women made for the citizens of this nation and for me.

When I think of freedom, I realize how blessed I am to express my faith. In some countries Christians are persecuted for spreading the gospel, or even owning a Bible, while others are killed in churches because their country discourages it. The freedom we have in America not only lets us express our faith freely, but it also enables us to choose our own faith. We aren’t forced to follow Christianity, or any other religion. Instead we can choose our faith on our own.

During our country’s history, many soldiers marched off to fight for our freedom. They sacrificed their

lives to ensure that people in America were safe and free. The freedoms that they fought for makes me want to honor and respect them. What they did gave me the right to show my faith, to speak freely, and become a successful citizen.

Freedom also lets me show my character. I don’t have to put on a fake face just to live every day. I’m not required to be perfect. I can make mistakes. To me, freedom lets me fail and try again. I’m not forced to act like another person due to rules and regulations that the government has set, but instead I can show my true identity.

Some people take freedom lightly; others don’t give it a second thought. To me, freedom is a chance to live in a country where I can express my faith, honor those who fought for it, and show who I am without being afraid. Freedom is a gift that some of us don’t even know we’ve accepted, but for me freedom is a privilege.

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