

## Veterans organization offers awards for students

Sisters VFW Post 8138 will be sponsoring its annual VFW awards at the local schools again this year. One student will be selected from each category to receive the monetary reward:

- The Patriot Pen Award (\$100) is given for a middle-school-grade essay on patriotism. The essay is due in October.

- The Voice Of Democracy Award (\$100) is given for an essay and voice recording on patriotism. The essay is due in October.

- The Arts Award (\$100) is given at Sisters High School for a patriotic poster design. The project is due in March.

Brochures detailing the projects will soon be available at the Sisters schools. Call 541-549-1132 and leave a message or mail Sisters VFW Post 8138, PO Box 682, Sisters, OR 97759 for more detailed information.

## Man's legacy will support environmental protection

Gil Staender, a long-time resident of Camp Sherman and the Sisters area, loved the great outdoors. He was a guide on Mt. Hood and summited more than 50 times. He was active in the Mazamas, The Nature Conservancy, the National Audubon Society, Greenpeace, Utah Wilderness Coalition, and other conservation societies.

He and his wife, Vivian Staender, spent a year in the Arctic, in the wilds of the Brooks Range of Alaska in 1965. They authored several books about the experience. They sold their house in Lake Oswego and moved to Sisters in the 1960s, where they purchased a section of land north of town. They built a stone house "off the grid," before being off the grid was popular, and named the place "Wildhaven," which has been donated to The Nature Conservancy. Gil taught school in Sisters, and the couple helped legislate for the very first bottle bill in the U.S., passed in 1971.

Though Staender died a year ago, his legacy lives on — and continues to impact the wilderness world he so loved.

Last week, Staender's estate donated \$530,000 to the Western Environmental Law Center, in Eugene.

"This is the largest gift our organization as received in our 24-year history," said David Lawlor, development director for the Western Environmental Law Center. "It was unexpected. It is very, very meaningful to us."

Lawlor said the organization's board of directors will meet soon and discuss the uses to which the generous behest will be put.

The center has multiple purposes in its legal efforts to protect wilderness, wildlife and the environment. It has worked on endangered-species protection and is working to protect the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument. It also fields a climate management team tasked with keeping fracking out of sensitive areas and litigating regarding the impact of coal plants and coal burning.

Lawlor said the board will explore potential expansion of their programming and the possibility of adding



PHOTO PROVIDED

Ali and Rick Geraths of Sisters presented the Western Environmental Law Center in Eugene with a gift from the legacy of Gil Staender for \$530,000.

capacity through the use of the Staender behest.

He also noted that the organization intends to name its giving program after Staender in recognition of the scope of the gift and the extraordinary life the German immigrant built in the American West.

Ali and Rick Geraths of Sisters, who were close friends with Gil, traveled to Eugene and shared photographs and stories from Gil's

life, which, Lawlor said, added much to the impact of the gift for the organization.

"All of our staff and board members were floored by Gil's generous gift when I sent an email today telling everyone," Lawlor told the Geraths. "We are all so very, very grateful and appreciative. Having the knowledge of Gil's personal life makes the gift so much richer and more meaningful."

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