



JAN MICHELS & 'CHICA'

Unexpected career becomes dream job

I.V. resident still dedicated to law enforcement work after more than 20 years

By BRITT FAIRCHILD
Staff Writer

Truth be told, Jan Michels never dreamed of a career in law enforcement.

It just sort of happened.

"I kind of got roped into it," mused the senior parole and probation officer on a recent morning in her office at the Josephine County Bldg. in Downtown Cave Junction.

It was 1981, and her husband, Lt. Larry Michels, was then a deputy with the Josephine County Sheriff's Office.

Since her husband worked alone without backup, his sergeant talked Michels into training to work with him.

Her initiation into the crime-fighting world was swift and intense. On her first night of duty as a county reserve patrol officer, she was with her husband when he found the body of Glen Howard Ford, the 64-year-old caretaker of Store Gulch Campground, murdered by two transients.

A head-on collision in which five passengers in two vehicles died, and a felony takedown followed in the next few days.

After that, "You could say I was hooked," Michels said.

During her more than 20 years with the sheriff's office, Michels has worked in several areas of the department.

After eight years as a reserve patrol officer -- during four of which she was also involved with Josephine County Marijuana Eradication Team -- Michels was stationed full time in the county jail until 1997, when she became a

parole and probation officer.

While she enjoyed the other positions, she said it is her current role that best suits her.

She not only likes the mix of responsibilities in the office (talking with clients and paperwork), and out in the field (home visits, appearing with a client in court), but the opportunity to help improve an individual's quality of life.

Her goal, she said, is to help remove the barriers that stand in the way of her clients' successes so that they won't re-offend.

Recent cuts to county programs resulting from the failure of Measure 28, however, have affected her ability to help some of those clients with mental health drug treatment issues.

"Choices, (a drug and alcohol treatment program) closing (in the valley) really hurt me," Michels said, noting that now a number of her clients have to go to Grants Pass.

"Transportation is a big issue," she added.

Budget decreases in general over the years have also led to manpower changes in the area.

Michels is the only probation and parole officer to live and work in the valley. Her caseload is 155 to 175 clients, which includes all I.V. adult cases except for those dealing with sex offenses or domestic violence, compared to the average of 90 to 100 for other officers in the county.

"I see every person at least once a month in my office," she said.

Not one to be intimidated, Michels has earned a reputation for being firm but fair.

"I can't afford to lose my credibility out here," she said. "You treat people like people."

But violators will be held accountable, she added.

And for whatever reason, Michels said that a couple of weeks or so ago, she was with a deputy at a residence, and when the deputy introduced her, the woman took her hand and said, "You're famous."

However Michels' work wouldn't be complete without "Chica," her long-haired Chihuahua sidekick of sorts.

"(When I got her at 5 weeks old) she fit in the palm of my hand," Michels said.

Not wanting to leave "Chica" at home with her Weimaraners, Michels brought the puppy to work -- something she thought would only last a few weeks.

That was 2 1/2 years ago.

"She's proven to be therapeutic," Michels added, noting that the dog goes with her to all her home visits and is often a good conversation "icebreaker" with her clients.

Honored as the county sheriff's office 2002 Officer of the Year, Michels said that she has had too many successes to feel discouraged about the nature of her job.

Although, she said, she sometimes asks herself, "How did you get this job?"

"It's a cool job," Michels said. "I can't imagine doing anything else."

Grilley's goals include health of watersheds

Ginnie Grilley, new deputy forest supervisor for the Rogue River and Siskiyou National Forests, began her duties in March by meeting with forest employees, community members, county officials, partners, and local congressional staff to learn about forest and community issues.

Grilley, a career U. S. Forest Service employee with nearly 20 years working on Oregon national forests, had been the deputy regional engineer or the Pacific Northwest Region in Portland. She also served on the Willamette, Siuslaw, and Mt. Hood National Forests, and was the acting deputy forest supervisor on the Fremont-Winema National Forest during the 2001 Klamath Basin crisis.

"I was introduced to a variety of Rogue Valley resource issues during a Medford Bureau of Land Management assignment in the fall of 2002," Grilley said, noting that she plans to help lead the forest on issues related to fire recovery, facilities and roads management, collaboration with the BLM, and the implementation of critical environmental analysis projects.

"I care passionately about public lands, and my focus will be on healthy watersheds and healthy communities," Grilley added.



FUN & GAMES - Travis Wilson, 11, (left in top photo) and his best friend, Nick Scalzo, 12, both of Selma were among participants on Sunday, April 6, when DMZ Paintball held its first games of the year in Kerby. In bottom photo, an unidentified player holds his secured paintball marker while examining a bucket used for target practice.

IVHS Activities Calendar
Brought to you by the folks at

WILD RIVER & BREWING CO.
592-3556
Cave Jct.
469-7545
Brookings/
Harbor
471-RIVR

Blame us if your life goes to Pizzas!

THURSDAY, APRIL 10
*Blood drive- in gym
*Drama production- 7 p.m.

FRIDAY, APRIL 11
*Boys golf at Dutcher Creek - noon
*JV Track at North Valley 3:30 p.m.

*Drama production - 7 p.m.

SATURDAY, APRIL 12
*Girls softball at Phoenix 2 p.m. - doubleheader
*Boys baseball vs. Phoenix here - noon - doubleheader
*Track at Glide - 10 a.m.

*Drama production - 7 p.m.

MONDAY, APRIL 14
*No classes

TUESDAY, APRIL 15
*Girls softball vs. Henley - here - 4:30 p.m.
*Boys baseball at Henley 4:30 p.m.
*Track at Hidden Valley 3:30 p.m.
*Boys golf at Running 'Y' noon
*Girls golf at I.V. noon

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16
*OSSOM meeting
*ROTC - port - lunch
*Site meeting at I.V. 3:30 p.m.

DOG & DRAFT - \$3

TAYLOR'S Sausages

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- JEFF WOOD, M.S., P.T.



SOFTBALL SWEEP - IVHS Cougar Kim Hamilton (above, right) led the team to a 2-0, 10-1 victory against the Mazama Vikings with 11 strikeouts and no walks during game one of a doubleheader on Saturday, April 5 in Cave Junction. During the first inning of the same game, the Cougars scored their first two runs of the Skyline Conference opener. Meghan Jackson (photo above) aided the team with a single to help get the Cougars started. (Photos by Sam Newton)



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Siskiyou Community Health Center 30th Year Anniversary Open House

Siskiyou Community Health Center in Cave Junction is having an Open House celebrating our 30th year and introducing Lucinda Kolo, M.D.

Please come join us and meet Dr. Kolo, the staff, and some of our board members. We look forward to seeing you.

We will have the latest information on our new clinic building planned on the north end of town.

Date: April 11, 2003
Time: 4 to 7 p.m.
Location: 319 Caves Hwy.
Cave Junction, OR