

Ten minutes with ...



... Rita Eaton, retired Cave Junction library specialist.

When is your birthday?

I was born May 10,1925 in Dairy, New Hampshire during the Depression. I lived in Revere, just north of Boston, for 25 years.

Did you come from a large family?

I have two sisters and two brothers; I'm the baby. There were only five years between us. I pal'ed around with my oldest sister, Pauline. My brother, Donald, had a regular paper route, a Sunday paper route, and a magazine route. I was always with him helping make deliveries. He would even wake me up in the summertime to pick blueberries so we could sell them. We got about 50-cents a week for the Sunday delivery, and about a quarter for the magazine route. Of course, Donald gave all of that to my mother. That was during the '30s.

What was it like growing up during that era?

Well, you'd say we were poor, but nobody thought of it as poor. My mother was a great seamstress; a dressmaker. She kinda' dressed our small town, and she got paid for it. My dad was a shoemaker; he also graduated from a seminary school so he was very learned. In 1938, he went to work for the Social Security Administration (it was just starting up at the time). He retired from that when he was in his 60s.

Did you graduate high school?

Yes. I got a double promotion when I was in the third grade. I did half a year in third, half in fourth, and then I graduated to the fifth. So I was about 17 when I graduated.

I went to work as a waitress when I was 16, making 20-cents an hour. I was working there on Dec. 7, 1941, when Pearl Harbor was bombed. That was a big change for everybody. All my friends went off to war, and there was almost no male population; those were our black days. We had to ration everything. But, in a small town, we never had to do without.

What did you do after waitressing?

In 1942, Donald enlisted. My other brother was married, so he didn't go right away. Pauline and I enlisted later. I joined the Army in 1944. I was a WAC (what members of the Women's Army Corps were called). We went to Fort Demoine, Iowa for basic training. I stayed there a year. In 1945, the war was over. They transferred me to a hospital, which was an eye-opener. There were so many wounded boys. It was sad seeing them hurt, so young. I've been a pacifist ever since.

In 1986, I went to work at the library in Cave Junction. They were just getting computers then, and I fell in love with them. I checked people in and out, shelved and ordered books. I did so many things; it was more than interesting. I liked working in circulation the best; putting holds on books for people and looking up books for them.

It always surprised me how much fun it was to find a lost book for someone. I was there 18 1/2 years before I retired. I have no regrets. I never had a day go by where I minded going to work. When I went to graduations, I would see kids there that I had first given library cards to or read their first book to; small towns are nice like that.

Are you married?

Yes, to Arthur. When he was 16, he zipped down to Boston, and we met in my small town. There were only about 50 people in the town, and about five streets, so you got to know everyone. At 20 minutes to 6, every night, everybody congregated to get their mail; that's how I met "Lefty."

His mother used to buy all the stuff we sold. She'd buy our blueberries in the summer, and apples in the fall. He was the new kid on the block, and I looked at him and thought he was quite handsome. During the summer, there was a swimming hole we called "The Pit," where we all used to meet. He had to go right by my house to get to the swimming hole. One night, I was sitting on the porch when was coming home from swimming. He saw me and stopped to talk. He said, "Wanna go out?" And that was it. I was young at the time, and we had five years of war between us, but I always knew he was the one. After the war, we got back together and married. We have six kids now; all of them live here.

When did you move to Cave Junction?

In 1971. We bought a house on Hays Cutoff; we call it Eaton Acres. There were about 15 or 16 of us in a commune known as White Schoolhouse. It was a caring kind of life. When we rode into Cave Junction, I fell in love with it. I lived for 20 years in Phoenix, Ariz., where there are no trees. I love trees. I got a feeling here right away that everything was going to be OK.

Of course, the town is much bigger now, but it's still nice for a small town.

What is your favorite ice cream flavor?

Coffee. Häagen Dazs is my favorite.

~Interview and Photo by Shane Welsh

FAC newcomer Reagan plans for Feb. 12, 26 events

(Continued from page 11)

set for Saturday, Feb. 26.

Each year, the committee sends its technician, Mike Mitchell, to private properties at the request of land owners, to write a prescription. The prescriptions, written keeping the wishes of land owners in mind, is the plan for the number and types of trees the property needs to restore its riparian areas to a healthier state.

If the land owners need help planting trees, a tree planting day is held annually, and volunteers across the valley community get together to plant dozens of trees for several land owners. The trees and planting are free of charge for the property owners.

However, while the committee has leaned toward private land owners in the past, Reagan said that the focus is different this year.

"The main tree planting day this year is Saturday, Feb. 26," said Reagan. "Volunteers are

needed in all areas, especially team leaders.

"What's new and different this year is that most of our focus is going to be at the 'Forks'," she said. "We feel that since fire ran through there last summer, it would be good to plant trees to restore the beauty and health.

"We're excited about that because people can go to a public place and see the trees they planted; and they can come back in 30 years and say, 'I planted that tree.' We want it to be a place where people can come together to celebrate this wonderful, beautiful land around here."

The committee's goal, Reagan said, is to not only make it a fun day for the children involved in planting, but also to have a sense of community and ownership by residents.

"Whether people four-wheel or harvest their land, most people here have a connection to this land, more so than people who live in other areas,"

Bad pest bugs Oregon ag

An unwanted exotic insect pest with an unsavory name and an unappealing scent has shown up in Oregon, triggering a statewide alert asking citizens to help with detection.

The brown marmorated stink bug, *Halyomorpha halys*, has made its first appearance west of the Mississippi River and brings with it the potential for agricultural damage, as well as the potential for being an unwanted house guest in large numbers.

"We don't know for certain that this species of stink bug has been established in Oregon, but our expectation is that there could be many more out there," said Jim LaBonte, taxonomic entomologist with the Oregon Dept. of Agriculture.

The bug is common to Japan, China, Taiwan, and Korea. It was first found in the United States in 2001 and, until last summer, was confined to a handful of East Coast states, including Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and West Virginia.

In August, LaBonte made an unexpected find in a trap set up for exotic wood-boring insects in southeast Portland.

The trap contained a single specimen of a half-inch by half-inch brown bug

that LaBonte identified as the same pest that has caused problems back East.

"We knew the species was established on the East Coast and has been causing problems for farmers," he said. "Also, we know it has been a household pest, getting into people's homes in large numbers."

Where the bug has become established, it can enter homes by the thousands, which can be "stressful and disturbing" to residents.

Reagan said.

This connection is one that Reagan and her partner said they immediately felt when they came to the valley.

"Planting native trees here helps control the weed population," she said. "It also creates habitats for animals, especially fish, so that's why we concentrate on riparian areas. It also helps keep the water cooler.

"We try to plant what belongs here and keep it native," Reagan said.

An open house will be held Saturday, Feb. 12 starting at 10 a.m. at FAC headquarters below the U.S. Forest Service complex in Cave Junction.

"We'll have four speakers," said Reagan. "The first will be Paula Yablonski and she'll do a

presentation about trees. The second is Rich Nawa from the Siskiyou Field Project, and he'll talk about the importance of wood to streams and wildlife.

"Next, Bob Budesza, a weed expert from BLM, will do a noxious weeds presentation. And, lastly, Mike Mitchell, our FAC technician, will talk about ecosystem planting," said Reagan.

"The morning," she said, "will be geared more toward children. It's important because they are our future. But, people can show up whenever they want, or stay for just one or all presentations."

For more information on the tree-planting project or the open house, email Reagan at forestryaction@cavenet.com or phone 592-4098.

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