

Here, There & Everywhere

WATERSHED WATCH - Public review and comments on the draft Watershed Health Factors Assessment are scheduled Thursday, March 9 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Bank of the Cascades at Sixth and Savage streets in GP. The event is being hosted by the Illinois Valley Soil & Water Conservation District (IVSWCD) and I.V. Watershed Council (IVWC) in conjunction with the Rogue Basin Coordinating Group. The assessment will be of the tools used by watershed councils to establish priorities for watershed enhancement and restoration efforts in Illinois Valley. For more information, phone Kevin O'Brien, IVWC coordinator and IVSWCD manager, at 592-3731.

MIX 'N' MINGLE - Finger food and beverages will be offered during an Illinois Valley Chamber of Commerce open mixer Friday, March 10 at Jefferson State Financial Group in the kryptonite green building between DQ and Cascade Automotive. The informal gathering will run from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. Alan Laurie, an Illinois Valley artist, will display business logo make-overs and samples. Attendees are asked to bring a business card for a raffle of various items donated by businesses, and \$1 for a 50/50 fund-raiser. RSVPs are requested to phone 592-6262.

GOING CELTIC - An evening of Celtic food, song and history will be featured during the third annual Welsh Dinner Saturday, March 11 at the Selma Community & Education Center. Reservations via 415-1000 are needed, as only 60 seats are available. Len Lea, the valley's "local Welshman," will bring the authentic flavor of Wales. The menu: carrot-apple soup, Welsh stew, Bara Brith bread, Glamorgan vegetarian sausage, leek-potato pie, pear dessert and rhubarb crumble. P.S., Enjoyed your joke, Len, about the Irishmen who need a bus.

FOREST HAPPENINGS - An open house to learn about projects being planned in the Galice and Illinois Valley Ranger Districts will be held Monday, March 13 at I.V. High School. Those interested in the environmental analysis process should visit anytime between 4 and 7 p.m. U.S. Forest Service resource specialists will be available to discuss the potential projects that will be studied this year. There will be no formal presentations. Questions about the meeting can be directed to District Ranger Pam Bode at 592-4001.

COUGAR BRAIN BOWLERS - The Illinois Valley High School freshman/sophomore Brain Bowl team tied for first place with a 4-1 mark in its division, competing in Ashland on Tuesday, Feb. 28. The team didn't proceed to the semifinals because its one loss was to South Medford, the other 4-1 team. IVHS, the only school from Josephine County, represented the school and valley well.

IT'S EXTREME! - Cross Quest Expeditions is hosting another I.V. Extreme Sports Festival in Jubilee Park on June 17. Races: a WAC (Wilderness Adventure Challenge) triathlon, a team relay, and a challenge run. Competition will be comprised of skating, BMX and paintball events. Plus there will be Christian bands, and a children's carnival. Phone 592-3329, or visit crossquest.com.

NOTEPAD - A blood drive by the American Red Cross will be held Thursday, March 9 at Illinois Valley Senior Center. Donations will be taken from 1 to 6 p.m. To schedule an appointment, phone (800) 448-3543 ... **A food drive**, sponsored by Curves, has the goal of collecting some 3,000 pounds of food items to be donated to Harvest Kitchen. All donations are welcome and can be dropped off at 360 Caves Hwy. ... **Understanding Medicare** prescription drug coverage benefits is the topic for a free workshop for senior citizens in Medford on Thursday, March 23 at the Reston Hotel, 2250 Biddle Road, from 9 to 10:30 a.m. followed by counseling and info booths until noon, said U.S. Rep. Greg Walden (R-Ore.) ... **I.V. Fire District volunteers** during 2005 donated 24,000 hours to the community, it was noted recently by JoCo Undersheriff Brian Anderson during an awards ceremony ... **Lip synch** preliminary competition will be held at I.V. High this week, with six acts to be chosen for final competition beginning March 20 ... **Goodwill** of Southern Oregon reports 2005 revenue of \$9.8 million with expenses of \$9.7 million ... **Funny stuff:** *Message on an outdoor church sign: If you have insomnia, don't count sheep. Talk to the Shepherd. *What did the Buddhist monk say to the hot dog vendor? Make me one with everything. *Ever notice that "fat chance" and "slim chance" mean the same?

LAST WORDS - Have a heart that never hardens, and a temper that never tires, and a touch that never hurts. (Charles Dickens)

Letters to the Editor

(Continued from page 2)

only opposed to logging the public forests here, but also support having these forests protected as a Nature preserve. BLM will find itself up against public opposition as strong as it did when it tried the same thing 10 years ago.

As a resident of the East Illinois area, I am strongly opposed to BLM's timber sale in my backyard. As a person who loves my forest home and habitat, I for one will let my representatives know that I am against logging here and will do everything in my power to stop it.

Wouldn't you, if it were in your backyard?

Our private war: dealing with ALS From Glenda Graham Cave Junction

With all the chaos in Iraq, war is very much on everyone's minds these days. Yet, few people know that in our home town of Cave Junction, there is another courageous soldier quietly fighting a similar battle every hour every day.

The soldier is my mother, Ardith Graham, and the enemy is a cruel disease: Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), or Lou Gehrig's Disease. The tragedies in Iraq seem too far away to concern us as a family, as we struggle to contain and control the progression of the debilitating ALS nightmare.

Iraq's daily conflicts are the least of our family worries.

My mom, Ardith, was born in Ross, Calif. in April 1943. She is a Yurok Indian from her father, and is half-sister to the Head Matron of the Navajo Clan in Arizona. Ardith married Glenn Graham after graduating high school in 1961.

After living most of their lives on the northern coast of California, they retired and

moved to Oregon in 1999, settling here in Cave Junction so they could be close to their family. They currently have two daughters, one son-in-law, one granddaughter, and one grandson.

Seeking challenging employment because of retirement boredom, Ardith accepted a position at I.V. Head Start in 2001, where she proceeded to create delicious, nutritious, and child-friendly meals for the next 2 1/2 years. She loved the position and its daily contact with the program's young children.

Unfortunately, she began having trouble with a degenerative hip, causing her constant pain and frequent falls. So, in December 2003, on the advice of her doctor, Ardith underwent the major operation of hip-replacement surgery. Her doctor assured her that once completely healed from her operation, she would quickly regain her physical strength and balance, allowing her to return to a normal active life, including her position at Head Start.

It was May 2004, after months of excruciating pain, slow healing, and unbelievable boredom for mom, that our family realized something was terribly wrong. Ardith's strength still hadn't returned, and she began to fall again.

Glenn realized that Ardith's speech was very slow and was beginning to sound distorted. Months later, after many tests and guesswork the diagnosis was given: Ardith has ALS, a terminal disease with no known cause, treatment, or cure.

What is ALS? It is a progressive neurodegenerative disease that usually attacks upper and lower motor neurons and causes degeneration throughout the brain and spinal cord. Common first symptoms

include painless weakness in a hand, arm, foot, or leg which affect a person's balance, causing walking difficulties and frequent falls.

Later symptoms include declining speech, all-over body weakness, overwhelming fatigue from daily living activities, sudden laughing or crying outbursts, swallowing problems, and breathing difficulties, which result in feeding tubes and respirators.

Ardith fights a losing battle every day. After using considerable strength on a simple chore like getting out of bed, she must then face many things within her own home that she can no longer do for herself. Due to paralyzed muscles in the throat, Ardith struggles with her speech.

The effort it takes to get in and out of the car exhausts her small store of strength completely. The trials of being confined to a wheelchair are unbelievable. Overwhelmed and frustrated, Ardith rarely leaves her home now, due to these and many other difficult challenges.

As bad as it must be for my mom to have to face ALS, helplessly watching her lose to this disease rips the heart out of the rest of us in our family. There is no talk of plans for next Christmas, or what will be planted in the rose garden my parents began last summer.

There is only talk of the doctor appointments for each week, and what was discovered on the Internet by one of us while researching for information of the next step soon to be faced in this slippery slide to the bottom of our nightmare.

Yes, my mom still has her wicked sense of humor, which springs out at the most unexpected times -- her gift to us, when we all need to laugh, usually during an intense moment. The amaz-

ing aspect is that we as a family have become so much more aware of each other's special uniqueness.

Our family doesn't bicker like we once did; instead we say much more meaningful things at the moment we experience them. As a family, we never neglect to tell each other how we feel, just in case.

My purpose for writing is not to seek something from this community that my family and I are a part of, but to encourage everyone who reads this to immediately find their friends and loved ones so they may tell them just how important they are.

And, finally, to insist that everyone no longer delay doing the important things. There may never be a "right" time, but there sure can be a lifetime of regrets and "if only's."

I want to end this letter by sharing a glimpse of the love my parents have that has carried them all through their lives together:

During a recent sunny day, my dad wheeled my mom out to sit among her flowers and enjoy the warmth of the sun. As they sat together among the perfume of mom's roses, mom began to cry.

Wrapping his arms around her, my dad seemed to know exactly what she was mourning. He held her tightly, silently communicating his love and understanding.

I felt blessed to witness this private moment shared by two people who have been through so many things together in life, as they realize there will never be the much anticipated "golden years" of hunting and traveling together. Kissed by twilight, they are simply two people in love who no longer look forward to each sunrise.

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You are cordially invited to attend
the 1st annual
Illinois Valley Bridal Fair
Saturday, March 11
at the Junction Inn, Cave Junction
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Presented by

Rose of Sharon
Florals & Wedding Planning
and the

Junction Inn

- ♥ The fair will feature Southern Oregon merchants who can make the most important day of your life more than memorable.
- ♥ Bridal Show and door prize drawings throughout the day.

Mark your calendar & bring your friends.

