



Life in the Valley of Riches

By DAN MANCUSO,
Publisher

I had the opportunity to go to the parties and take the class photographs at the annual alumni weekend which you will see in this week's edition. It was nice for me to put faces to the names of many of our subscribers. Having not grown up here, it was a chance to see the people who helped make this community what it is, I liked that.

I met Orville Camp, a 1953 grad, whose family homesteaded here in 1818. I also discovered that the class of 1983 has a fantastic pho-

tographer by the name of Debra Thornton. Pretty impressive work, I must say. There are many kids who enjoyed growing up here in the Valley and seemed pretty excited to be back, even if only for the weekend. Many others have stayed and left their mark on the Valley.

Leaving marks on the Valley brings another topic to mind. On Monday, the State Legislature passed HB 3453 which allows the governor to help cash strapped counties like Josephine. This is a bad bill in my opinion, but it will become law when the governor signs it.

The good news is that our county commissioners have to ask for it to be put in play. Some people call this bill the "recall bill." The reason is that if our county commissioners ask the governor to put it in place, they along with any other elected official will be recalled. In Curry County, the people are already initiating

that process.

The people of Josephine County are not in a public safety crisis. The City of Grants Pass, is though. Currently, the 50 patrol officers of the Grants Pass Public Safety Department have no room at the county inn to place the troublemakers that are plaguing the city. In the county for the past year, meanwhile, we have had, I think, only three deputies assigned for rural patrol. That means the city has over 16 officers for every deputy the county has. Now, with the City of Grants Pass having 70 percent of the county's crime with only 50 percent of the population and 16 times more law enforcement, it seem rather obvious that Grants Pass has the problem, not our beloved Valley.

A few weeks back, Grants Pass City Councilmember Lilly Morgan purposed that the city of Grants Pass spend \$1 million to rent 26 jail beds from the county. What an obvious and apparently bold move on her part. But, what did the folks in Grants Pass have to say about her leadership? No, they said, if we fix the problem, we will never get a levy passed. The pow-

ers that be want you to be afraid so you will pay more in taxes while county residents will not get any more service than we get today. Some 70 percent of the jail population is arrested by the city. And they want YOU to pay for it. Sure, city residents pay the same 58 cents per \$1,000 of assessed valuation as we do for county services. But, they detain 2.5 times more people than our sheriff's office does.

Now, let's think back to 2010. How many of you were burglarized? How many of those burglaries were solved? Due to the budget cuts at the county, I have had difficulty getting that number. Using the crime rate index from CLRSearch.com, Cave Junction had in 2010 a burglary risk of 84, Grants Pass had a rating during the same period of 178 while the national average was 100. Seems like Grants Pass has always been in a state of public safety crisis.

If our elected officials try to enact this 18-month stop gap measure, you can count on recall forms being passed around.

Thank you for picking up this week's paper ~ djm

A moment with Mary: By Mary Halvorsen

I went up to the Oregon Caves National Monument over the weekend. It was the 21st of June, the Solstice, the day the summer employees used to throw their first party. We would hike through the woods to a clearing, one by one, or in groups of 2, 3, or 4, in whatever costumes we could drum up: biker chic, superman, or a cedar tree, branches attached to arms and legs. One guy found a yellow, diamond shaped road sign and tied it around his neck. We would laugh, drink, and ultimately howl at the moon, but mostly we bonded. Some of the most enduring friendships of my life began while scrubbing bathroom floors, flipping eggs on a hot grill, and gearing up to howl, those summers of my late teens and twenties.

All these years later it was about deciding which trail to walk.

We chose the Cliff Nature, a one mile trek with an elevation gain of 300 feet that started out steep. Winding through old growth, the path leveled out and the breath-catching pauses lessened. We came to a rocky outcrop with a display that identified Grayback, Little Grayback, and the rounded cone of Eight Dollar Mountain in the distance. I remembered being on that trail for the first time, long hair swinging loose, with Nan from California, Matt from Ohio, Deb from Kansas, each of us finding a spot on the rock ledge, and looking out over the Valley for the first time.

It was called Sunset Point, and the girl I was then, in Osh Kosh overalls, who never had to stop for a breath, was present this day, thirty-seven years later, the Valley seen through the same eyes, with the same wonder.

There are certain spots in life that afford us to walk side by side with our nineteen year old selves, to see the world with that young vision again. These are the places that should be returned to as often as possible. The young men and women we once were seem to lie patiently in our souls, waiting for a little adventure. While I no longer want to free-fall from an airplane or run off a cliff encased by a hang glider, it's good to know I can start an ascent, and make it down the other side.

One week after the Cliff Nature Trail, I was back at the Oregon Caves with my son and his girlfriend to attempt a longer hike. As we trekked behind what used to be the girls dorm and farther up the trail, the old Guide Shack, I didn't fear the 3.5 mile loop, but the 1,125 ft. elevation gain that came with it.

"There's the water tank!" I exclaimed, more excited than the stained wall of concrete through the brush seemed to warrant. "I had totally forgotten about it. We used to go up there and lay out." My son's girlfriend asked, "How did you get on it?" and I wanted to say, "I was 19, there wasn't anything I couldn't do," but remembered only "It was easy."

Seeing that water tank was like seeing an old friend, and the faces of those I hadn't thought of in years, swam before me. We walked up and up. I sweated, breathed hard, and stopped to rest many times, eventually above a stretch of green, slanting meadow, which like so much from 1976, I hadn't thought of in decades.

The estimate for the Big Tree Loop Trail was 2-3 hours and we completed it in 2:15. Upon discovering we had walked it within the al-

lotted time, twenty years seemed to slide away, as we headed down to the lodge. I don't know if it was the clear air, or the elevation, or the fact that I sat on a smooth expanse of yellow-grained wood, a section of the four-story staircase that swept from the second floor of guest rooms into the dining area. Through a huge window on the landing, my eyes rose over the fish pond and waterfall, to the narrow drive I once walked each morning, and the memories of a lifetime began to play.

As I sat there I got it. I am dug in, this is my place. It reaches from the Chateau at 4,000 feet to the beaches along the Illinois River. From age 19 to today, the hills and valleys of a life have lead here, the climb slow and steady, the vistas worth every step.

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Obituaries

Adelena

R. Strayer Passes Away
Beloved Mother and Grandmother Adelena R. (Minke) Strayer passed away on Sunday July 7, 2013 in a Portland Nursing Home. She was 98 years old.

She was born in December 1915 to Harry and Elizabeth (Schilling) Minke in Davenport, Iowa. She was the first of three daughters.

She graduated from Davenport, Iowa High School in 1935 and completed Business Courses and worked in a law office in Davenport for several years.

In 1940 she met Henry Strayer of nearby Rock Island, Illinois and they were married on Nov. 29, 1941 just 10 days before the Japanese Attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii that propelled the United States into World War Two.

They had four children: David born in 1943, Dennis born in 1946, Mary born in 1947 and Christine born in

1952. The family moved to Oregon City, Oregon in 1955 where the children attended St. John The Apostle Catholic Grade School. In 1963, the family moved to a home in S.E. Portland where Dennis and Mary graduated from Grover Cleveland High School in June 1965.

Mrs. Strayer enjoyed music, working in the community and was an active member of the Catholic Relief Society. In the 1960's, she and her family helped many Cubans who fled Castro's Communist Cuba relocate to Portland. As a result of their work, both Mr. and Mrs. Strayer were made honorary Life Members of the Portland Cuban Club.

Mrs. Strayer also enjoyed gardening and always took fresh grown flowers and roses from her garden to neighbors and to her Chiropractor, Dr. Emery L. Wayman.

She was preceded in death by her late husband

Henry who died in 1975 and her two sisters Irene who died in 1988 and Ruth in 2008.

She is survived by sons David of Portland and Dennis of Cave Junction, Oregon, daughters Mary of Portland and Christine of Salem. In addition to her children, she is survived by three Grandsons, Shane Sipe of Portland, Justin Baker of Illinois and Adam Baker of Oregon. A private family memorial service will be held later this year.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to either the Illinois Valley Chamber of Commerce's Bluegrass Festival (on July 27, 2013 at Lake Selmac) at P. O. Box 312, Cave Junction, OR 97523 or to the Kerbyville Museum and History Center, P. O. Box 3003, Kerby, OR 97531-3003.

Helen E. Versteeg, age 94, of Cave Junction, died Monday, June 24, 2013 at

her home.

A funeral service will be at 1:00 p.m., Saturday, July 13, 2013 at Illinois Valley Funeral Directors (chapel) with Walt Freeman conducting. Private interment will be at Laurel Cemetery. Hull & Hull Funeral Directors are in charge of arrangements.

Remembrances may be made to Illinois Valley High School Scholarship Fund, PO Box 2086, Cave Junction, Oregon 97523 or the American Red Cross, Southern Oregon Chapter, 60 Hawthorne Street, Medford, Oregon 97504.

Helen was a member of Eastern Star; Illinois Valley Garden Club; and served on the Josephine County School Board (now Three Rivers).

She especially loved to play bridge.

Survivors include five children; nine grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Dr. Charles Versteeg Sr. in 2002.

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