

A moment with Mary: By Mary Halvorsen

It snaked up long, black, and shiny, gloved hands hauling it from the shed. Water from the rusted seal dripped warm on my leg as I trudged up the hill, dragging seventy feet of pipe, until the pump guy called for me to stop.

I had turned on the bathroom faucet that morning, then every other outlet in the house, and nothing had poured forth; not a drop, not a sputter, not a cough of air. I contacted a well service company, and they were on the scene by early afternoon.

I looked down at the braid of three wires entwining the length of the pipe, at the round, opaque discs, attached every few feet that looked like worn, plastic, coffee saucers. Encased in a metal cylinder, the pump lay attached at its end, on a packed dirt floor. “It looks like a Stanley thermos” I shared with the technician, as he bent over, studying it. Only his

pinky was small enough to fit inside and turn what looked like a paddle wheel. “It’s not the motor” he reported, as he pushed the white, fanned, cylinder around several times. Looking at a part that looked slightly more dense than paper, I thought, “Is that what powers water to faucets, the shower, the washing machine, and the spigots for drip irrigation?” I had thought it would be more industrial, with gears and loud clanging parts. It looked like a tiny paddle for a steamboat whose passengers were half an inch tall.

He went to his truck and carried back a gray metal box with a crank on the side. On the end of a cable, a large wrench was attached. He placed it into the well cylinder and began turning the crank fast. When it hit water, the splash echoing back to us, he brought it out, studied a spot on the line, murmured something about

the depth of stagnant water, then dropped it in again, lowering it like a fishing pole.

The sound of splashing water far below, brought to mind an underground pool, deep enough to swim in, with large rocks encircling it. The technician explained that it was a narrow space, the mass surrounding it, full of crevices allowing water to filter in. As the image of the underwater cave faded, I thought of a quote I had seen that day displayed on a well service web page that seemed appropriate, as I became acquainted with our well: “If there is magic on this planet, it is contained in water.”

He had asked earlier how deep our well was, how many gallons per minute it produced, and the age of the pump. I admitted that I didn’t know, that I had known once, but had forgotten, and he chastened, “These are things you should know, should have

written down somewhere.” I defended, “My husband knows,” and realized how lame that sounded, as if our well and water was part of some “Gentleman’s Only” club, something I didn’t need to concern myself with.

I take water for granted every day, but watching the well be uncorked, and exposed, the pump hauled up, analyzed, and examined, has been a valuable experience.

I do not know the geographical ancestry of the hillside I live on, but during the rainy season water courses across it. It races down a narrow canal along the driveway, channels through the forest, deep enough that our son built dams on it, when he was young. It puddles around our cars, and rushes out gutter spouts. The slope our home is on is referred to in the Soil Survey of Josephine County as an “Alluvial Fan,” alluvium being “material such as sand, silt and clay, deposited on

land by streams.”

I only know that I like the term “alluvial fan” better than slight incline. It seems to do the beauty of the property, with its Jeffery Pine, Cedar trees, Madrone, Black Oak, Manzanita bushes and wild flowers, justice.

Just as a rocky hillside may be an alluvial fan, a well is more than the sum of its parts. We drop a wrench down a shaft and envision an underwater world, build a home on what may have once been the bed of a flowing stream, and sit inside as water flows around and beneath us throughout the winter. The cycle of water is all around, the need to know its story evident. Though I now know the basic mechanics, working parts, and pertinent numbers of our well, there is more to it. As Benjamin Franklin observed, “When the well is dry, we know the worth of water.”

Local Beta Sigma Phi News

Alpha Nu Master Chapter, formerly Laureate Beta Beta, kicked off the new sorority year with a Beginning Day social at Riverside Park in Grants Pass. Members from Grants Pass and Cave Junction enjoyed root beer floats, shared summer travels and distributed yearbook information.

Members of Alpha Nu Master will meet in the home of Virginia Gilliam on September 16th at 7pm. Agenda items will include preparing for our holiday fundraising and social events. Fresh

nuts by the pound will be available again during the holiday season in support of our Scholarship Program. Watch for more information in late October.

If you are interested in learning more about Beta Sigma Phi and the local chapter, please contact Vice President, Virginia Gilliam at 541-592-2293.

Letters to the Editor

Illinois Valley News welcomes Letters to the Editor.
Please e-mail them to
dan@illinois-valley-news.com

POLICY ON LETTERS:
‘Illinois Valley News’ encourages letters to the editor provided they are legible and not libelous or scurrilous. All letters must be signed, including name, address and telephone number. The latter need not be published, but will be used to verify authenticity. The “News” reserves the right to edit letters. Letters are used at the discretion of the publisher.

(Editor’s Note: Views and commentary, including statements made as fact are strictly those of the letter writers)

My husband and I were selected by the I.V. Lion’s Club as Grand Marshalls of the I.V. Lions Club Labor Day Parade. We were extremely honored to say the least. We have enjoyed

participating and volunteering our time and support to the I. V. Lions Club and the annual festival for the past 13 plus years. We stay involved because we so appreciate all that the I.V. Lions Club does for Valley residents. We both feel however that many other people should have been riding in that beautiful classic car on Monday with us. There are so many volunteers, the I.V. Lion’s members, wives and countless friends and citizens of the Valley. Amazing how it all comes together. One person cannot go without mention for she has provided invaluable support to both Wayne and myself for many, many years. Sue (Mary) Peterson has been the “Let Me Help” person and always with a smile. She inputs, outputs, edits, proofs, keeps us on track and going in the right direction, recommends, maintains back up files and the list goes on and on. Amazing lady!!! The frosting on the day of the Parade is that my great granddaughter, Aryana was able to ride in the Parade with us. A new and beautiful memory was gifted to us.

Too late to classify

Estate Sale

Saturday 14, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. 627 S. Junction Ave.

Yard Sale

3605 Rockydale 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday 14, and Sunday 15.

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Save the date

Sept. 11

The facts and fallacies of the Affordable Care Act will be discussed at 6 p.m. tonight at Josephine Community Library, 209 W. Palmer, Cave Junction. The free presentation by Mary Reynolds-Walter will include a short video and a question and answer period. 541-592-6262.

Sept. 14 2pm

Sept. 14 2pm Get To Know Your Rights! Prestented by Attorney Paul Loney Admission is free. Takilma Community building, home of the Dome School. 9367 Takilma Rd. Learn the basics of the Oregon Medical Marijuana act. Understand how the law can affect you. Protect yourself in encounters with the police; on the street,in a vehicle,or in your home. Learn about new legal updates and HB3460 Tell a friend and Be safe, Get to know your rights!

Sept. 13 & 15

Madrone Adventist Elementary Located at 4400 Holland Loop. Fund raiser yard sale Lots of new stuff. Friday and Sunday 9-3 Sept. 13 & 15.

Sept. 17

The Josephine County Fair Board will hold a regular meeting on September 17, 2013 at 6:00 p.m. in the Pavilion Building at 1451 Fairgrounds Rd., Grants Pass, Oregon 97527

Sept. 24

Reading is the most important skill you can teach a child. Of all the skills kids learn, it is the one you can influence the most. We invite you to visit our Scholastic Book Fair and experience a celebration of reading that provides families the opportunity to get involved in a universal mission: Encouraging kids to read every day so they can lead better lives. Our Scholastic Book Fair is part of a reading event that brings to school a wonderful selection of fun, engaging and affordable books kids want to read. Giving kids access to good books and the opportunity to choose their own books will motivate them to read more. And like most acquired skills, the more kids practice reading the better they'll get. Reading is vital to every child’s success and it’s the door opener to the 21st Century for all children. Since there will never be a substitute for a parent’s direct involvement in his/her child’s education, please make plans to visit our Book Fair. Hope to see you there! Book Fair dates: Sept. 24 – 27, 2013 with special event on Wed., Sept. 25 during IVHS Open House from 5:30 – 8 p.m. in the Illinois Valley High School Cafeteria. Refreshments will be served.

Sept. 28

Saddle up! BCHO Poker Ride, Sept. 28 in the Illinois Valley. Call 541-597-4383 or 541- 592-4806 for more details.

Oct. 19

GRAVEYARD TOUR
The Josephine County Historical Society is once again presenting its popular Graveyard Tour on Saturday, October 19. The event will be held in the Oddfellows/Masonic cemetery off Football Boulevard. Once again the Living History Players will take you on a journey into the past. Come and listen as the pioneer stories come alive. Characters long forgotten will entertain and amuse you, as they retell the stories of Grants Pass’ beginning years. Many of our ghosts are found here in the cemetery, while some others are just visiting for the night. Either way they will educate you about the history of our town. The Graveyard Tour will have two tours; at 4 and 6 p.m. Advanced tickets will be \$10.00 for the first person, \$5.00 for each additional person. Tickets at the gate are \$10.00 each person. Family discounts will be available. Advanced tickets can be purchased online at www.jocohistorical.org or in person at JCHS Research Library, 512 SW 5th Street. For more information, please call the Historical Society at 541-479-7827.

OCT. 19 & 20

Saturday and Sunday: Come to ARTOBERFEST @ the RCC building in Kerby and enjoy CHOCOLATE CROISSANTS or PUMPKIN PIE at the Nature Center Nibbles booth!

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