

Celebrate the spirit of giving

The public is invited to join Amnesty International's Write for Rights campaign between 11 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. on Saturday, November 30, at the I.V. Branch of Josephine Community Libraries.

"The idea behind this international campaign is to celebrate the spirit of giving," states local organizer Anita Savio. "During the holiday season, when so many Americans can count their blessings, Amnesty International selects 13 people around the world who are either falsely imprisoned or otherwise putting their own safety on the line in order to stand up for human rights."

During the session, each writer composes a brief message of hope to their choice of prisoners living in 13 different countries. Attractive note cards, information and talking points will be provided. Those who wish to email their letters are asked to bring their own laptop or other WiFi device in case library computers are not available.

Participants are also welcomed to bring their own non-holiday themed stationery and to donate funds toward the cost of overseas postage. Those involved in the writing session are also asked to write

an email or letter to the appropriate government official to either free that person from prison or otherwise address their specific human rights issue.

"We know this process works," Savio adds. "Each year, this campaign runs from November first to the end of December. One of the 13 prisoners Amnesty chose to support this year has already been released from prison after over 13,000 people wrote on her behalf."

Following a trial in Cambodia, Yorm Bopha was sent to prison in September, 2012. She and others had led a peaceful protest to mark the anniversary of a forced eviction in their community. She was subsequently accused of planning an assault on two men and sentenced to 3 years in prison. Amnesty International declared her a prisoner of conscience and successfully campaigned for her release.

"This activity sends a message of hope," Savio states, "For example, Mehman Huseynov in Azerbaijan wrote about the letters he received last year: 'I want to thank Amnesty International for the support they have shown me. I no longer fear being impris-

oned because after having seen all the letters and messages of support, I understood that we are stronger than they are."

"I believe each and every human is responsible for helping to create social justice and access to human rights for everyone in the world," Savio continued. "This is our chance to use our freedom of expression to stand up for the freedom of others."

Savio suggested the "Write for Rights" event at the library might also be a meaningful family activity during the Thanksgiving weekend. "Amnesty International is the largest grassroots human rights organization in the world. Campaigns like these, offering support and appeal, have been very successful in the past, both to bolster the spirits of those who are suffering alone and, in many cases, to force action by their governments. So this should be a truly rewarding experience for us all, doing our part to help create a safer and more just world."

Those who want to support the campaign but can't participate November 30 are asked to call 541-592-3073. If there is enough interest, more writing sessions will be scheduled.



(Photo by Jenna Larkin, Illinois Valley News)

Six area youths took advantage of good weather and no school to spend some time at Jubilee Park in C.J. Donavan Lehto (left), Damin Atwood, Daniel Allen, Gino Perata, Heather Kern and Bree Lansdown.

Vets ... Continued from A-1

HB 2417 increases the existing property recording and filing fee from \$15 to \$20 dollars. The bill requires a fixed percentage of these funds be spent by Oregon's Housing and Community Services Department specifically to assist homeless veterans, veterans at risk of becoming homeless, and low-income veterans and their families.

HB 2421 streamlines state services for veterans by directing the Oregon Department of Transportation to share names and addresses of service members and veterans with the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs on a monthly basis regarding licenses, identification cards, certificates of vehicle title, and vehicle registrations.

HB 2158 makes college more accessible and affordable for veterans. It gives veterans at Oregon's public universities and community colleges the opportunity to pay in-state college tuition; to make college less expensive for those who can't prove current residency in the state.

One way for individuals to support veterans is to volunteer. The I.V. Eagle is looking for several people to help transport veterans to their appointments. Rowan asked those interested to call Dee at 541-944-3741 for more information. Those wishing to assist with the next Stand-Down, or other American Legion activities can call Rowan at 541-660-1342.

Other opportunities include "Soldiers' Angels" Adopt a Veteran program whereby the volunteer commits to sending one letter a week and one care package a month to a soldier deployed overseas. "Cell Phones for Soldiers" donates one hour of talk time for troops overseas for every donated cell phone. Those interested can go online for further information.

Fire ... Continued from A-1

A wood stove's air supply can be limited by closing down the stove damper or air inlets too soon or too much. Burning unseasoned wood increases creosote, because energy is required to drive off the water trapped in the wood. This keeps the resulting smoke cooler than if seasoned wood is used. Also, in the case of wood stoves, overloading the firebox with wood in an attempt to get a longer burn time will contribute to creosote buildup.

Routine chimney cleaning is a must. A wire brush should be used to scrub the inside of the fireplace and stove. To clean from above, use a chimney brush available at home improvement and hardware stores. Be sure to have enough length to reach the bottom. The opening at the top of the chimney needs to be measured to purchase the right size brush. It's a good idea to put some sort of block in front of the fireplace to prevent soot and ashes from going into the room.

Draft is the natural pull of air that draws up the chimney and enables the smoke to escape the home during a fire. To show which way smoke travels through the system, strike a match and quickly blow it out. Once draft is established, the chimney is ready for use.

Cleaning and maintaining a fireplace and wood stove is only half the equation in preventing chimney fires. The other half is choosing the right wood and taking measures to prevent creosote build-up during the burning season.

Choose hardwoods that have been seasoned, or dried out over a period of time. Green wood contains water, resins, and tannins, and can deposit too much creosote in a chimney that can quickly lead to an obstruction. Pine and fir have much higher resin content than oak or madrone, which results in more creosote. "Chimney sweeping logs" are made to offset creosote, but

have questionable results.

Lastly, periodically inspect the lining of the chimney throughout the burning season. If cleaning is needed, choose a day when the weather is relatively warm and after the fire is completely out. Also, install a CO detector in the home for peace of mind.

Daylight savings time is over for the year. Routinely replacing batteries in smoke detectors the same day you change your clock is highly recommended. It's also important to have a fire extinguisher located conveniently in the house and to learn how to use it in advance of an emergency.

For consumers who don't wish to clean the chimney themselves, a professional Chimney Sweep should inspect the system annually, and clean and repair it as needed.

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