

Illinois Valley News

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Reunion Mania

By
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Illinois Valley's unique playbook for knitting generations together and celebrating shared community values was very much in evidence last Saturday as Chris Duncan Leppert ('54) and some of her team members, including Sara Hoskins Jones ('56), Donna Zimmerman Tellyer ('56) and Charlie Hickerson (GPHS '56), organized and catalogued silent auction items at the Kerbyville Museum for the Association of IVHS Alumni and Friends and KUHS Alumni, Inc.

Class years ending in either 4 or 9 will be feted this weekend with everything from pizza parties to rafting the Rogue as the classes congregate to remember the past and encourage academic successes for the future. The mission of IVHS Alumni is to assist class reunions, locate and maintain historic school memorabilia and provide scholarships for IVHS seniors.

The annual Reunionmania Newsletter offers insight into the purpose of the group. On the back page, Carol Dinkel Dickson ('74) explains, "Some question why the reunions are always on 4th of July weekend. ...Back when all this started (1973) it was evident that we needed a three-day weekend..."

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(Photo by Dan Mancuso, *Illinois Valley News*)

A Valley cyclist enjoys the skate park Saturday, June 28. The new skate park has been a popular place for the area youth to show their aerial skills.

Officials urge extreme caution with fireworks

By
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Despite last week's rain, fire season regulations remain in effect and no burning is allowed on any private lands in Josephine County. In addition, fire officials are particularly hopeful that the public will employ common sense during Fourth of July celebrations.

"The rain last week was nice, but it did nothing to change the fact that we are facing potentially extreme fire season conditions this year," said Oregon Department of Forestry Fire Prevention Specialist Brian Ballou. "Things are burning easier and earlier than usual."

Fireworks should never be used in areas where there is flammable vegetation, and parents are advised to keep in mind that lit sparklers carried by children running through dry grass can easily start fires, especially this year. Sparks can also ignite dry brush, blackberries, manzanita, buckbrush and more, which can rapidly escalate into dangerous wildfires. Officials point out that parents are financially responsible for wildfires caused by their children.

"If you use fireworks and cause a fire, you can get citations and be held liable for the firefighting costs," Ballou said. "It can be a pretty steep bill."

Fireworks should only be used in fire-safe areas, like concrete driveways, on green lawns or on large

patches of bare earth and people should have a charged garden hose or buckets of water standing by. Children using fireworks should be supervised, and if a fire starts that cannot be easily controlled, officials say to call 9-1-1 immediately.

Fireworks are not allowed in Oregon's forests and wild lands during fire season. They are also not allowed at any time in state or county parks and campgrounds, national forests and parks, and in the Wild and Scenic Section of the Rogue River.

"Virtually all the fires we've had so far in both Josephine and Jackson counties this year have been human caused," Ballou said. "There's been about 70 wildfires so far."

More than half of these fires have been debris piles that escaped. After fire season was called, most wildfires were caused by sparks from outdoor equipment. Motorized equipment use is now restricted and is only allowed before 1 p.m. or after 8 p.m.

"That 1 p.m. deadline is key, because everything dries out so fast," Ballou said. "Also, after using outdoor equipment, people should always do a one-hour watch over the area to be sure there's been no ignition anywhere."

The entire region is far more vulnerable than usual because the past few winters have not yielded enough rain. Leaf litter that is usually soaked-through by winter rains started off dry this spring and

the trees, usually full of wet sap in spring, did not receive adequate moisture and are also more flammable than usual. Wildfires thus have the potential to spread very fast.

Ballou explained that "we are currently seeing conditions that are more like August," and that long-term forecasts predict extended periods of dryness and high temperatures.

"This fire season is going to be all about what the lightning does," Ballou said, "That, and how people behave. If we can avoid human-caused fires, we can get through this year."

For tips on using fireworks safely, go to a website hosted by the Rogue Valley Fire Prevention Cooperative at <http://rvfpc.com>.

Chamber discusses Caves expansion

By
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A lively discussion took place at Wild River Brewing & Pizza on June 26 as the Illinois Valley Chamber of Commerce welcomed their second guest speaker, Greg Walter, co-owner of Jefferson State Financial Group.

Walter sits on the board of the Crater Lake National History Association and has been involved in promoting the expansion of the Oregon Caves National Monument (OCNM) for a number of years, including traveling to Washington, D.C. to testify to Congress on behalf of the idea.

About 30 gathered for the presentation, including OCNM Superintendent Vicki Snitzler and Josephine County Commissioner Keith Heck. Walter discussed the history of efforts to expand OCNM, including one proposal in 1913 to expand the boundaries to 23,000 acres. He also distributed fact sheets to the audience.

"Culturally and economically, the community sees the value of this proposal, which simply transfers management of federally

owned lands from one agency to another," Walters stated. "Unfortunately, there's been a half dozen monument proposals in recent years involving various wilderness and non-wilderness areas. This has been confusing for some folks as to what would and would not be included in this particular proposal."

The Oregon Caves Revitalization Act of 2013 (OCRA) is sponsored by Rep. Peter DeFazio in the House of Representatives (H.R. 2489) and Senators Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley in the Senate (S. 354). The bill would implement the National Park Service's Management Plan to expand the existing monument boundaries to include 4,070 acres now managed by the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest.

The bill would affect .01 percent of the 1.8 million acre Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest. No private property would be affected. The legislation would also transfer four acres of National Park Service (NPS) land where the Cave Junction water treatment plant is located to city control. The remaining acreage in the parcel which includes the Illinois Valley Visitor Center would remain NPS property.

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Scientists support Monument expansion

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The Oregon Caves National Monument was originally established to protect the "unusual scientific interest and importance" of the cave system. The original 484 acre monument, when established in 1909, was believed to be large enough to protect the cave.

Since then, over one hundred years of scientific research has yielded insights that highlight how cave ecology is influenced by actions on the lands both above and surrounding the cave system. A better understanding was gained of hydrological

processes in and around the main cave, including increased knowledge regarding the movement of creeks and groundwater in the area.

"Dye-tracing studies done in the creeks suggest that the headwaters of surface drainages may not be the same as underground drainages," said Oregon Cave's Resource Specialist John Roth. "So just protecting what appears to be the top of a surface drainage system may not fully protect the whole system. Also, environmental impacts can move uphill. One example is how fish swimming upstream can bring diseases with them."

Approximately every 25 years, a management plan is drafted for the monument that includes proposals and

recommendations from the community. All national parks are required to hold public meetings to help park staff discern how to best protect the lands they've been entrusted to manage. For Oregon Caves, this process culminated in the late 1990's with the publication of the monument's General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement.

The plan's recommendations for park expansion were largely based on protecting the monument from pollution of its public drinking water supply caused by cattle grazing; reducing harmful effects of future logging on adjacent public lands;

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