

Authorities warn of fast water after death on Illinois

Annette McGee Rasch
IVN Senior Contributing Writer

Hot weather drives people to the water - but after one of the wettest and snowiest winters in decades, rivers throughout the Pacific Northwest are running high and cold, and these conditions have contributed to several water-related fatalities in recent weeks.

In one local incident May 18, Tina Behneke, 20, was "knocked off balance and swept away" while attempting to cross the Illinois River at Store Gulch, outside of Selma, according to Deputy Cory Krauss with Josephine County (JoCo) Search and Rescue. Behneke's two companions had tried to save her, but couldn't reach her in time. Krauss said she'd entered the river at a spot where people normally wade across, "but with these conditions, the current was just too strong and too fast." Behneke, from Medford, remained missing for 10 days until found by a family friend Sunday, 100 yards downstream from McCaleb's Ranch.

"If you're going to recreate around the water, just be aware that what you would normally anticipate

the water to be like this time of year, it's going to be faster and it's going to be colder," Krauss said. "With the swiftness of the water, it might look nice and calm and inviting, but you can't really tell how quickly it's moving and you shouldn't underestimate the current and what it can do to you."

Mindful caution on the Illinois River is warranted for at least several more weeks. Krauss said "people should look at the river carefully before they choose to get in it, and if they do get in, they should know their limitations, wear personal floatation devices and be aware of their surroundings. Also, small children do not have the knowledge and situational awareness that adults should have, so be extra cautious and make sure they're in some kind of floatation device, and preferably with a tether - so you have a way of quickly retrieving them."

Animal advocates also remind people that puppies and young dogs can easily get in trouble in fast water - and that all animals rely on us for their safekeeping.

"Throughout the region, we have the situation right now where all our lakes and water reservoirs are full. So all that cold snow

melt from the mountains is going straight into the rivers," said Sven Nelaimischkies, meteorologist with National Weather Service. "This situation should last a few more weeks at least, and then gradually decline."

Nelaimischkies went on to explain that "there's all sorts of problems with cold water. You lose control of your extremities. With the colder temps, the nerve impulses just don't flow down your arm as well, so that can make it hard to hold onto a log, branch or flotation device. Also, with the flows that we've had over the winter, debris could have clumped up and can cause entrapment situations."

Ashley Massey, spokeswoman for the Oregon Marine Board, describes Pacific Northwest river conditions as a "perfect storm" that should have everyone on "high alert as additional snowmelt continues to enter the river systems." She wants boaters to exercise additional caution and also said those jumping into a swimming holes are likely to find more treacherous conditions than normal.

"The water temperature is frigid — 50 degrees or below in many areas," Massey said. "The

current is very strong. Arms and legs quickly cramp with exertion in cold water, especially when the outside temperatures are hot. This scenario is how many people drown."

Other incidents include a man who went missing after

jumping from a bridge into the North Umpqua River; and a 16-year-old boy who was swept off a waterfall on the Snoqualmie River in Washington state.



(Photo by Laura Mancuso, Illinois Valley News)

The swinging bridge near the McCaleb's Ranch where Behneke's body was found by a family friend and recovered by JoCo Search and Rescue.

Kerbyville Museum

"Jewel of Southern Oregon"

- Restored Pioneer Home (Naucke House)
- Early Mining & Timber History
- Area Native American History & Basket Collection
- Local Pioneer Artifacts
- Extensive Military Display

Kerbyville Museum's Mission:
 "To preserve, protect and promote the history of the Illinois Valley of Josephine County and Oregon"

Our Museum Complex Represents:
 The Mining & Timber Industries
 Our Native Americans
 Local Pioneer Artifacts
 Early Farming Displays
 Extensive Military Display
 Research Center

Hours Open:
 April through October
 Tuesday - Saturday 11 am to 3 pm
 Sunday 12 pm to 3 pm
 Closed Mondays
 Call 541-592-5252
 For Hours & Appointments
 Admission Charged

24195 Redwood Hwy
KERBY

ANNUAL IV SENIOR CENTER FLEA MARKET

SATURDAY JUNE 3RD
8 AM TO 4 PM

Kitchen will be open for breakfast, lunch and snacks!

IV Senior Center
 520 E River St
 Cave Junction
 541-592-6888

Spaces still available - 20 x 20 \$10

Sportsman Tavern

2 Pool Tables & Shuffleboard
 Friday Night Karaoke
 Saturday Night Pool Tournaments
 Bloody Mary Sundays 11 am - 4 pm
 NFL Special Events
 Steel Tip Dart Boards

ZUMBA

with
Lisa Sherier

Wednesdays
\$5 DROP-IN
6:15-7:15 PM
 at *Healthy U*
535 E River St.

DIGGIN' LIVIN'

Organic Groceries - Farm Store - Deli

HOURS:
 9 AM TO 7 PM MONDAY - SATURDAY
 SUNDAY 10 AM TO 5 PM
 KITCHEN HOURS 9 AM TO 5 PM

BREAKFAST:
 9 AM - 12 PM
 BACON SANDWICH
 VEGGIE SANDWICH
 BREAKFAST BURRITO
 MAPLE PECAN WAFFLE
 FARMHOUSE WAFFLE

LUNCH:
 12 PM - 4 PM
 TURKEY PESTO PANINI
 PORTABELLO MELT
 THAI CURRY WRAP
 DIGGIN BURRITO
 TEMPEH REUBEN

SANDWICHES:
 ALL DAY
 TURKEY CRANBERRY
 DIGGIN VEGGIE
 CHIPOTLE CHICKEN WRAP
 BUILD YOUR OWN

541-592-4483
 143 S REDWOOD HWY
 CAVE JUNCTION OR

SOUP:
 10 AM - 4 PM
 DAILY SELECTION
 VEGAN OPTION AVAILABLE

FIRST FRIDAYS
 10% OFF ALL BULK

Art's Red Garter

Homestyle
DINNER SPECIALS
 Mon - Sat
 5-9 PM in Lounge

KARAOKE
 Wednesdays @ 9 p.m.

ELLIPSE

Friday, June 2
 @ 5:30

from
Taylor's Country Store

WILD RIVER

HANDCRAFTED FOOD & ALE

GUPPY

Saturday the 3rd @ 6 p.m.

Every Wednesday
Open MIC Night
 6 - 8 p.m.

J Barley
 Fridays @ 6 p.m.

KARAOKE

w/ Steve - OH

Friday, June 2 @ 9 p.m.

Saturday Pool Tourney @ 7

Free pool on Sundays

Sportsman Tavern

The SPOT

Hump day Karoke w/
Jammer Dave
 8 - midnight

Open Mic w/ B
 Thursdays @ 7

RIPPLE EFFECT

Friday, June 2
 7-10 PM
 Outdoor Stage

EAT
 @
McGrew's!