



## Her life in the Valley of Riches

by Laura Mancuso, editor

As I was listening to the public comments during the commissioners' weekly business session Wednesday at City Hall, a young man from Merlin looked me in the eyes and told his story of how he started growing medical marijuana for his father who was diagnosed with cancer and that he was frustrated with the proposed RR-5 ban. It really made

me think that I agree with Commissioner Hare, "This is a complicated issue."

Why should we make a new ordinance to ban commercial cannabis grows on RR-5 when there are already zoning laws in place? It seems to me no matter what plant you are growing or material you are producing, you should be a good neighbor and abide by the zoning laws already in place. I think it is time we invest in code enforcement and force growers to be good and honest neighbors, but at the same time it is not fair to penalize our local farmers who have grown for years and years without being a problem.

Do we really want to hurt the cannabis economy? I know for certain that the "green rush" has indirectly contributed to feeding my children. I have only lived in Cave Junction for five years but I still know that many of the Cave Junction businesses have increased their profits

since legalization. When I first moved here, Illinois Valley Building Supply was not as busy as they currently are, and I have witnessed the same thing at Shop Smart and all of the restaurants.

I wish all the old prejudices and attitudes about marijuana would change. I, for one, think cannabis is a beautiful plant that blooms in the fall and blends in with our green trees, and needless to say it can be a miracle plant for medical issues. I would much rather drive by a cannabis farm than black plastic and wooden fences. After all, I drive by vineyards without fences every day. And health statistics tell us that overconsumption of wine has far greater consequences than consuming too much cannabis.

Don't worry, Dan is in Chicago visiting his father and will return next week with his commentary.

Thanks for reading this week's paper!

## 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 The latter need not be published, but will be used to verify authenticity.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.

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

### Hypocrisy

A few weeks ago the I.V. News posted a front page story detailing the Crime of the Century - a homeowner moved some rocks in the river next to his home to help stop erosion. You would have thought he had started an open pit mine.

Compare that to the countless hundreds of illegal marijuana grow ops in our valley alone - how many are stealing water from every creek, stream and river branch - without water rights? What about draining the aquifer with commercial ag on land zoned RR-5? Since there are only 100 legal grow ops in the whole county

(according to Josephine County), it's obvious the vast majority of these so-called "family farms" are illegal. Where is the outcry about this massive water theft from those who are concerned about the environment? (Crickets...)

Also noteworthy is the fact that last year 80% of the legal grows failed the test for allowed chemicals, according to an article in the *I.V. News*. Just imagine the over use of all kinds of ag chemicals on the vast number of illegal grows - pouring into the dwindling waterways and land all over the county. Where is the outcry about this? (Crickets...)

The followers of the marijuana business/cult really care about "green" all right - folding green.

**P. Kisiela  
Cave Junction**

### Reader calls out Peter

To the Honorable Peter DeFazio: Wildfires are a fact of life in the West but certain policy shifts by the U.S. Forest Service have made them much worse since the 1980s. The concept that conflagrations are more numerous as a result past suppression efforts has led to ignoring lightning strikes which rapidly spread into 100,000 acre monsters. None of this summer's fires should have been allowed to get away and I would be hard pressed to conceive of any summer fires that should not be suppressed immediately.

In my youth, during the drought years of 1964-1965, I fought wild

fires for the State of New York in the Catskill Mountains. I worked also for the Forest Service on the Allegheny and Siskiyou National Forests. I fought fires and mopped up alongside smoke jumpers on many occasions, and know how effective a small detail of "commandos" can be in stopping a fire in its infancy.

Between 1970 and 1987 we had almost no major campaign fires in our jurisdiction and never a pall of sickening smoke like we've seen over the recent month. We had in Cave Junction an active Smoke Jumper Base, we had manned lookout towers on many peaks and a suppression crew of 40 trained Forest Service employees, locally stationed in the Illinois Valley, who stood by ready to go on a moment's notice. I know, I was one of them, and very proud to have had the job.

Then it all changed. Suppression crews were contracted out and stationed hours away from the Illinois Valley, the Jumper Base was closed and is now a museum and the towers either tumbled down or were rented out to tourists. Hundreds of miles of forest roads, which were put in at taxpayer expense as a timber sale deduction to provide fire access, were never maintained and became totally impassable. After that, big fires took hold for lack of action: Silver, Longwood, Mendenhall, Biscuit, Chetco Bar and many others, all caused on Forest Service land by unattended lightning strikes. "Oh they are way out in the wilderness", we were told, "no

danger to the public." But the wilderness has edges and there are always human populations on the other side. After six weeks, even without evacuation considerations, smoke levels have brought air quality down to hazardous levels for outdoor activity.

The loss this summer to commercial activity has been significant. Outdoor concerts and rafting trips have been cancelled, sports events postponed, Ashland's Shakespeare forced inside. Tourism is one of Southern Oregon's biggest industries but no one wants to visit in a cloud of unhealthy air. Furthermore, the long term loss to another major industry in your district, forest products, has been devastating. Fires in old growth forests burn slow and cool but once the flames get into second growth stands, all the young trees of similar size and species burn like a bonfire. This was supposed to be tomorrow's timber crop, planted and nurtured at tremendous expense to the taxpayers, now set back 50 years.

If our military technology is advanced enough to pick off a car load of Taliban leaders halfway around the world in Afghanistan then we should be able to hit a lightning strike ten miles from Cave Junction. Small airports in such places as Gold Beach, Gasque, and Happy Camp could be staffed with a small, seasonal crew and an advanced fixed wing, drone, or helicopter aircraft which could be deployed to hit a burning snag with fire retardant immediately after a lightning strike and knock it down until ground troops or jumpers could get there.

Also, and most important, the Cave Junction Smoke Jumper Base should be reopened as an active fire fighting center. Yes this will cost money, but far less than what is now spent to keep thousands of fire fighters in the field for months at a time and the indirect loss to the economy.

These fires have all happened, and are now happening in your district, although I am sure this is also true throughout the West. The Oregon State Forestry crews are excellent responders; they protect state, private and BLM land and, along with local fire departments, do a great job of initial attack. It is the U.S. Forest Service that is now unwilling or unable to get with it in a timely manner. Furthermore, back in the day there was always a "closest forces" policy but now jurisdictional squabbles emerge and fires go unattended for many hours even though fire fighters are in the vicinity.

It is time now to, not only spend the funds it takes fight fires, but change Forest Service policies back to a commitment to suppress all lightning strikes within hours after the event. If I can sit at my home computer and see a strike's specific location, why can't Fire Management do the same, and then take aggressive action? The present "let it burn" strategy is unsustainable.

I appreciate you and your staff taking time to consider my comments.

Sincerely yours,

**Robert C. Hirning,  
Takilma, Oregon**

## Obituaries

**Eddie "Roy" Evans, 87**, of Cave Junction, died September 12, 2017 at Asante Rogue Regional Medical Center.

Arrangements are pending with Illinois Valley Funeral Directors.

**Come out and cheer on our  
Cougars Friday night!  
IVHS football will host Bandon  
High School at home, 7 p.m.**

**ILLINOIS VALLEY FUNERAL DIRECTORS**  
**WWW.SINCE1928HULL.COM 541-592-4110**

## Save the date

### Sept. 20-30

Back to School Fine Amnesty at your I.V. Library! Now accepting nonperishable food items in lieu of cash payments for the last two weeks of September from Wednesday, Sept. 20 through Saturday, Sept. 30, 2017. For more information contact Roberta Lee at 541-592-4778. I.V. Branch, Josephine Community Libraries, 209 W Palmer St, CJ

### Sept. 20

IVHS boys' varsity soccer game at Rogue River High School at 4:30 p.m.

### Sept. 21

IVHS girls' JV volleyball game at Rogue River High School at 5 p.m.

IVHS girls' varsity volleyball game at Rogue River High School at 6:15 p.m.

### Sept. 22

IVHS boys' varsity football host Bandon High School at home at 7 p.m.

### Sept. 22

Last Day for judging the Guild's Up-cycle Contest will be Friday, Sept. 22 at the last CJ Farmers' Market at Jubilee Park

### Sept. 23

IVHS cross-country varsity Invitational at Rogue River High School, TBD

IVHS girls' varsity and JV Volleyball tournament at St. Mary's High School at 8 a.m.

IVHS girls' varsity soccer game host Rogue River High School at home at 10 a.m.

IVHS boys; varsity soccer game host Lakeview High School at home at 1 p.m.

### Sept. 23

Pie-In-The-Sky KXCJ Dinner and Pie Auction! Saturday, Sept. 23, 4-8:30 at the Kerby Belt Building 24353 Redwood Hwy, Kerby.

Join us for a fun and lively event-BBQ dinner, \$7 to \$10, sliding scale, plus live music, and of course, the not-to-be-missed pie auction!

All proceeds will go to help keep

your very own community-powered radio station, KXCJ, on the air!

### Sept. 30

10th annual Acorn Festival, Saturday, Sept. 30 at the Selma Community Center on Hwy. 199 in Selma, 11 a.m. - 6 p.m. This FREE outdoor/indoor event includes: \*Hands-on workshops on acorns and their processing, \*Acorn cooking basket demonstration, \*Historic photos of traditional acorn processing, \*IRVAC free nature crafts table for all ages, \*Fun and educational activities all day long and \*Scarecrow contest with \$100 prize. Karuk Elder speaks; all are welcome rain or shine. Brought to you by the Cultural & Ecological Enhancement Network (CEEN). For more information contact Suzanne Vautier 541-291-8860.

I.V. Garden Club plant sale, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. True Value Hardware parking lot. Winter veges, rare plants, trees, houseplants. All sales benefit IVHS scholarship program.

### Oct. 5

Family Fun Fair Oct. 5, 5:30-

7:30 p.m. at Evergreen Elementary 520 W. River Street, Cave Junction

Join us for games and chili dinner FREE! Be a judge in the Healthier Dessert Contest: \$4-\$10

Do you want to enter the Healthier Dessert Contest?

Sign up/Questions: healthycenter@gmail.com or call 541-592-4888

### Continuing

Your public library has activities happening every week! New Storytime reader, Melanie, has crafts and stories for kids of all ages Saturdays at 12 noon. Families at Play baby-parent group is for pre-walking babies Wednesdays from 1-2pm. Early literacy skills are taught within a thirty-minute storytime of songs, bounces, and reading, followed by a half-hour of play and chat time. For more information contact Roberta Lee at 541-592-4778. I.V. Branch, Josephine Community Libraries, 209 W Palmer St, CJ

\*Illinois Valley Community Watch Meeting every Monday from

5 - 6 p.m. at Wild River Pizza, 249 Redwood Hwy. - Cave Junction. A Public Safety Outreach Campaign effort with all I.V. Neighborhood Watch Groups - representatives, including businesses and churches, and support for anyone wishing to start a neighborhood watch. Includes a 2-way hand held radio program briefing from 4:20 - 4:50 p.m. Contact Guenther - 541-415-1929 / iwwatch541@gmail.com.

\*The I.V. Senior Thrift Store: Join the crew and make new friends. You don't need to be a senior citizen to volunteer at the store. Call us at 541-592-6630. Open Monday - Saturday, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

\*Volunteers are needed in the Cave Junction Substation to provide support service hours to the public. Applications are available at the Merlin Substation, 100 Acorn Street, Merlin, 541-474-5135, and on-line at <http://www.co.josephine.or.us/Files/Volunteer%20Application.Mar%202014.pdf>.

## Illinois Valley News

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