

Cave Junction

Following are the high & low temperatures,
and rainfall recorded at The End of the Road
in O'Brien by Cheryl Johnson:

Sept. Rain: 1.58" YTD Rain: 118.12"



Judy Hoyle

IVN Contributing Writer

It was a night of tribute for Denny Hare who died Aug. 7.

On Sept. 13, nearly 75 family and friends gathered for a special “Open Mic” night to share stories and songs in Hare’s honor at the Wild River Brewing and Pizza.

Hare, father of Josephine County Commissioner Simon Hare, was well-known in the Illinois Valley as a farmer, stonemason and jack-of-all trades. His furniture and weather vanes were renowned.

Hare was also a storyteller and gifted musician. For over a decade, he volunteered to teach the “Keep America Singing” curriculum to fourth-graders at Evergreen Elementary.

His teaching partner and tribute organizer Kent Fisher said, “Denny was a thinking, spiritual man with a giving heart. Evergreen fourth-graders loved Denny for bringing his sing-alongs to school every Friday. Denny had a thousand tales of his life’s adventures that kept everyone who knew him enthralled with each telling. Pizza Deli open mic’ers will always remember Denny’s bib overalls, classical guitar and unique rendition of ‘Ghost Riders in the Sky.’ He is missed.”

Scott Simpson, the regular Wednesday open mic host said, "We're all aware why we're here. It's sad, but I'm glad you're all here. This is meant to be a celebration of Denny's life. Denny was our family around here and this is how we treat family."



(Photo by Judy Hoyle, *Illinois Valley News*)

John Nolan (left), Linda May, Lawanda Simpson, Scott Simpson and Maureen Hansen perform at Denny Hare's Open Mic tribute Wednesday, Sept. 13.

ensemble of Hare's friends, including John Nolan, Linda May, Lawanda Simpson and Maureen Hansen in a rendition of "The Last Thing on My Mind." As was Hare's signature style, one note was held for an extended time before the phrase was completed.

Following the song, Simpson told the story of Hare fooling him when Hare was able to perfectly replicate the feedback noise on the first soundboard the group used for open mic.

Simpson related that he was baffled by the sound that continued after he had flipped every conceivable switch, and then in exasperation unplugged the machine, only to realize it was Hare making the sound.

"Nobody has ever gotten me that well," Simpson laughed.

Later, Simpson

declared, "If it wasn't for Denny, I never would have tried to sing or learn an instrument."

Next, I.V. String Band members Kent Fisher, Carol Valentine and Jack Dwyer performed "The Farmer Feeds us All" and Fisher explained, "Farming was an avocation of Denny's."

After introducing another song, Fisher said, "Denny was a naturally civic-minded leader and he invited me to join him in sharing our nation's heritage songs with the next generation."

Former Cave Junction city recorder Ryan Nolan sang a solo, accompanied by his father, John Nolan. When introducing the song, Nolan stated, "Parts of this song always make me think of Denny. He sang this at both my great-grandfathers' funerals, so now I'm singing

it for Denny."

Later, John Nolan and Dave Smith sang the Beatles "Blackbird" for Hare's widow, Evie. It was the first song performed at the first Bluegrass Festival at Lake Selmac.

The lyrics included the sentiments, "I'd rather do a neighborly deed and live by the side of the road, or travel a year for a friend in need..."

Many other songs were performed by those present, including "Amazing Grace." Toward the end of the evening, Simpson played a recording of Hare singing "The Last Thing on My Mind," for which many were moved to tears.

A Celebration of Life for Hare will take place Oct. 7 at 2 p.m. at Illinois Valley High School. All are invited to attend.



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