



## Her life in the Valley of Riches

by Laura Mancuso, editor

As I sit working at my desk, a local homeless man with the nickname of "Running Man" sits outside of the *Illinois Valley News* rocking back and forth and talking to himself. It looks like he will be camping there for the night and I am sure when I come back in the morning he will still be outside the door with a single blanket to cover himself on the freezing sidewalk.

This issue of homelessness is always on my mind. I feel so helpless. There has to be something that we can do to help those in need and to make our community a better place. I am always asking people, "What do you think we should do about the homeless problem in our town?" Most of the time, I get responses like, "Round them up and put them on a bus to somewhere else," or "Stop feeding them and they will leave."

I understand the frustration behind these answers, but they are not realistic responses.

Before I go on, I just want to clear the air. I am not a bleeding heart that is idealistic to the point that I think all the homeless need my sympathy and pocketbook. I am very well aware that there are different types of homeless. I like to break them into three categories: 1) families that are displaced from lack of funds and are looking to get back on their feet; 2) drug addicts who will not conform to society's rules, choosing to be on the streets - and often steal from our local businesses and residents in order to support their habit; and 3) the mentally ill that might need to be in a facility.

Recently, I was asked, "Why is your husband so against the homeless?" So again, to clear the air, it is only the second category that Dan Mancuso has an issue with. He gets angry with the homeless, meth addicts that break into Dairy Queen to eat a cake, destroy property and leave their trash downtown for all our potential tourists and customers to see.

I assure you when it comes to displaced families and the mentally ill, Mancuso has a big heart. Just yesterday he was trying to convince Running Man to see a dentist because he had been rubbing his face on the sidewalk. Of course he didn't succeed, but left only after providing him with dinner.

Homelessness is a serious problem in our nation and our small community. According to the Oregon Housing and Community Services, the last Point in Time survey showed the

number of homeless people in Oregon increased by 6 percent, from 13,176 in 2015 to 13,953 in 2017.

I want to commend Kate Dwyer and Robert Hirling of Takilma and City Councilor Jean Ann Miles for going to Grants Pass to meet with the sheriff and the staff of Options for Southern Oregon (Josephine County's mental health services). They wanted to find out if it would be possible for Options to provide "Boots on the Ground" type of counseling for the homeless who have mental health issues in the Valley. According to Dwyer, the meeting was successful because the director of Options agreed to provide training for the sheriff's office to enable them to better help when handling situations involving the mentally ill and also to provide social service information during these situations.

This is the kind of "out of the box" type of thinking that we need. I challenge other community activists and great minds to put their heads together, be proactive and find a healthy way to help the mentally ill in our community. Instead of just complaining, maybe we should start a Mental Health Task Force and start finding real solutions. I don't think we can rely on our government for this issue. It has to be a grassroots solution. If you have an opinion, write me a letter to the editor: [laura@illinois-valley-news.com](mailto:laura@illinois-valley-news.com)

And for a moment of levity, my Valentine's wish is for my husband to shave off his beard! Happy Valentine's Day! Enjoy 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](mailto: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.)

### Reader tells state they blew it

Attention OMMP/  
OLCC:

I'm letting you know, I'm not going to grow for our much needed patients again because 1) You have made it far too complicated with far too many regulations, where it has become way too costly to grow; 2) You have let in too many big commercial growers from out of state and ruined it for many local growers; 3) The supply factor is in and

the gate is open for money that should be kept here - is headed out of state. We local growers have to stop growing for our needy patients and that's not right; 4) If you were smart and not so greedy, you should have taxed each plant about \$500 to \$700 per plant, whether a plant made it or not. And you know lots of plants don't make it. But you

would still make the taxes on it; 5) I have spoken with other growers about it and they agree. The local growers spend locally and that keeps our community growing by spending money for food, gas, bills, electric bills and much, much more; 6) Local growers will support local business, but big growers will send your money out to other states.

That's really sad; 7) You have just opened the gate to the black market; and 8) \$500 per pound is not worth growing, you have killed the market and Josephine County in the mix too.

Good bye,  
**Ken LeGaux**  
Selma

## JCF Josephine County FOUNDATION Vision Clinic

Saturday, February 24, 2017

Illinois Valley High School  
9:00 AM-3:00 PM



FREE vision screenings and FREE fitted glasses will be provided to all who participate.

*Set up an appointment today!*

Sign up online to reserve your spot

[www.jcfserves.org](http://www.jcfserves.org)

(limited appointments available)



**Illinois Valley Little League Try-Outs for players wanting to advance to the next division will be held Sunday February 25<sup>th</sup>. From 1-3p.m. At Jubilee Park**

**Late and Final Registrations will be March 3<sup>rd</sup>. from 11 - 1p.m. At Wild River Banquet Room**

Contact Shelly Davis 541-415-1718  
or  
Tabby Harris 541-219-1391  
for more information

## WIND STORM

"it never occurred to me until this storm-day, while swinging in the wind, that trees are travelers...."

- John Muir

*no longer nestled in the understory  
of groaning branches  
I brave the storm*

*lashed by wind  
I clutch the pinnacle  
of the pine tree*

*I won't turn away  
if life flashes before me*

*I don't have a death wish  
I'm simply traveling*

*with the trees  
thrashing into the numinous  
swaying back and forth  
and back again*

By Michael Spring

# ILLINOIS VALLEY FUNERAL DIRECTORS

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## Save the date

### Feb. 14

IVHS boys' varsity basketball game play-offs at St. Mary's High School at 6:30 p.m.

### Feb. 18

Pancakes, Bingo, and Open Mic. The Dome School's secondary students will be hosting a fun pancake breakfast at the Takilma Community Building. Breakfast is made with organic ingredients, with vegan and gluten-free options available. Bring instruments and your talents for Open Mic time. Event runs 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Bingo starts at 11 a.m., with prizes donated by community members. Proceeds benefit the Dome School.

### Feb. 21 - 24

Wednesday, Feb. 21, thru Saturday, Feb. 24, 11 a.m. Your public library has NEW HOURS! Starting Wednesday the 21 the I.V. Branch will be open 4 days a week at 11 a.m.

Wednesday 11-6, Thursday 11-5, Fri day 11-5 & Saturday 11-5 For more information contact Roberta Lee at 541-592-4770. I.V. Branch, Josephine Community Libraries, 209 W Palmer St, CJ

### Feb. 24

On Feb. 24 a Vision clinic is being held at I.V. High School 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. by Josephine County Foundation Vision Clinic. Josephine County Foundation (JCF) is a student led nonprofit that inspires, engages and strengthens the community through innovative leadership and service. JCF has a "clear vision" to help Josephine County afford care through their vision clinic. People will receive a full eye exam.

### March 7, 14, 21 April 4 & 11

Seeds to Supper, Call to register OSU Extension 541-476-6613. A beginner's guide to low-cost vegetable gardening. The Josephine County Master Gardeners are presenting a FREE series of six gardening courses on how to raise your own vegetables. Learn how to garden on a budget. Participants receive a free gardening book and more.

Course topics: garden site & planning/soil development/planting/caring for the garden/harvesting and using garden bounty. Offered in partnership with Oregon Food Bank and Josephine County Master Gardeners

### March 17

Clean in Green, CJ Quarterly Clean up day, Saturday, March 17, 12:45 - 3 p.m., meet at I.V. Family Resource Center, 535 E. River St. Organized by Rotary Club of I.V. For more info call Nicole at 541-660-2419.

### Continuing

\*Evergreen Elementary school is looking for SMART (Start Making A Reader Today) volunteers. The program will run Tuesdays through Thursdays and volunteers are asked to come to Evergreen around 11:30 a.m. and will be out at 12:45 p.m. To learn more about the SMART program you can call 541-734-5628 or visit the website at [www.getSMARToregon.org](http://www.getSMARToregon.org).

\*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.

\*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 babies the first Wednesday of the month from 1-2 p.m. 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 541-592-4770. I.V. Branch, Josephine Community Libraries, 209 W Palmer St, CJ

\*The Sheriff's Office Substation in Cave Junction is now open on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 10 to 2. Volunteers are still needed to staff additional days. Applications are available at the substation or on line at <http://www.co.josephine.or.us/Files/Volunteer%20Application.Mar%202014.pdf>.

\*Cave Junction Patrol, LLC is looking for volunteers. CJ Patrol is a private citizen volunteer organization dedicated to effectively addressing heretofore-unchecked property crime in our city and neighborhoods. The primary mission of CJ Patrol is to prevent, interrupt, report and decrease property crime in the city of Cave Junction. Call 541-592-9665 or visit [cjp patrol.org](http://cjp patrol.org).

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