

ROAD CLOSURES

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set about the road closures is Molly Kernan, a 60-something firecracker from Tigard, OR who has hunted on the Heppner unit for going on 39 years. The retiree says she and her family may spend up to eight weeks in the forest, camping, hunting or just enjoying the land. She's concerned that, soon, hunters—especially older hunters—may not have access to any of the land.

"Over the years, we have lost road access into so many areas to hunt, and every year it seems as if we are losing more and more access," she said, citing Ruggs Ranch, Opal Butte and the area around the OHV park as examples of major losses. "Bit by bit, the hunter is being squeezed out of the Heppner Unit. Now, the UNF is trying to lock up roads that provide access to the canyons at Hog Creek and on the canyon road at Sunflower Flats, meaning that we'll have even more hiking to get into the area."

"That's probably okay if you're in your 20s, but most of the people I talked to while gathering signatures were much older, and many were in their 50s, 60s and 70s."

Yes, Kernan is taking action, gathering signatures on a petition to have the roads reopened. She said she and another gathered 197 signatures during elk season, but she is sure they could have gotten more by gathering signatures during deer season, as well, and covering more of the territory.

"Granted, I realize that some of these closures are less than a quarter of a mile, but to a hunter with several trips to a kill site, that quarter of a mile can add up fast, especially if the animal was downed in a canyon or up some rugged draw," she said.

Kernan added that less road access could become a safety issue, with more hunters hunting less land. It could also create an adverse economic effect for Heppner, she said, as hunters may eventually choose to go elsewhere.

She also said she doesn't buy the idea of closing the roads to protect the watershed.

"The UNF claims that it is closing some roads to enhance habitat for salmon, steelhead, and some species of trout that I've never even heard of. The creek bed on the Sunflower Flats road is dry about six or eight months of the year," she said. "I have yet to see a fish that could live out of water."

Buchholz maintains that watershed protection is an issue, even in seasonal streams like the one at Sunflower Flats.

"When water is in the streams, it can be at a critical time for juvenile (fish) rearing. We have a lot of streams that dry up during the summer. That doesn't mean we can't protect them," he said.

"Drive a four-wheeler through a dry stream, what's the big deal?" he continued. "You beat up the banks."

Buchholz added that damage done when a stream is dry can still affect the watershed when the stream is running.

Kernan said she also questions why the streams can't be fenced and the roads remain open.

"I do applaud the UNF for their plan to protect some of the streams with better fencing. Once, before road access to Bacon Creek was denied, I saw a dead cow lying in the stream," she said. "Hopefully, better fencing will do a better job of protecting those streams

from such things happening."

Buchholz said the Forest Service will fence in cattle areas, but stressed that fences also cost money. He also said he is up against an additional obstacle in keeping roads open in the Heppner Ranger District... Washington D.C. mandates that they close roads whenever possible.

Buchholz said many forest roads were built during a time when there was a lot of logging in the forest, which brought in revenue that could be used, among other things, to maintain those roads.

"Now that we're not getting money from logging, we don't have the revenue to maintain these roads," he said. He added that every Forest Service district has standing orders from congress to make forest roads "go away."

Hunters like Kernan say they don't understand the maintenance argument since, they say, many of the roads in question haven't been maintained in "decades." Buchholz concedes that may be true.

"It depends on the budget, on the need for the road," he said, mentioning that roads may be used for logging, hunting or law enforcement, among other uses. "Depending on the traffic we anticipate, we may not maintain it." However, the ranger added that ever-tightening budgets continue to require cuts to what maintenance does occur. While he didn't have the exact figure at hand, he estimated the entire road maintenance budget for the Umatilla forest for the year is around \$50 thousand, give or take.

"A heck of a lot less than we had 20 years ago," he said, adding that the Forest Service may not even have the money to grade the 21 road this year.

Kernan said she contacted Buchholz by letter, as well as contacting Kevin Martin at Umatilla National Forest headquarters in Pendleton, OR.

She said Martin never responded, and Buchholz "refused to do anything." She also said Buchholz told her that 85 percent of national forest land in the Heppner district is accessible within one-half mile of open road, a statement she said is "hogwash."

"If you look at a map of the area, it does look in some cases as if the roads are close together," she said. "What the map fails to tell you, though, is that in some cases there are steep mountains with rim rocks and no way to get up to or around them without mountain climbing gear."

Buchholz said that he understands the difficulties, but said that's how it is with mountain terrain.

"Yeah, you gotta get out of your rig and walk. That can be hard as we get older," he said. "I have to get out of my rig and walk

RELAY FOR LIFE

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Barrow 541-379-0608, or email gwolfllc@gmail.com. For out-of-area information, use 1-800-227-2345 or visit RelayForLife.org.

Touted as the world's largest grassroots fundraising movement, Relay For Life mobilizes communities throughout the country to celebrate people who have battled cancer, remember loved ones lost, and provide participants with an opportunity to fight back against the disease.

Relay brings together friends, families, busi-

nesses, hospitals, schools, faith-based groups...people from all walks of life, all aimed at furthering the American Cancer Society's vision of creating a world with less cancer and more birthdays.

at times, too. Oftentimes, it's on steep and rugged terrain. That's just how it is." Kernan said she has also been in touch with the offices of Sen. Ron Wyden and Rep. Greg Walden, both of whom, she said, have expressed concern over the problem. For Buchholz, though, that muddies the waters, since he said he has to refer the congressmen back to their own mandate to close forest roads whenever possible.

In the end, Kernan says she simply wants the voice of the forest user heard.

"My hope would be that both (Martin and Buchholz) realize that they have to do more than just look at their maps and make decisions based on environmentalist input only. They also need to be sensitive to the needs of forest users, which is not something that was even considered when these plans were put into place," she said. "As for me, the hunter has lost access to too many acres for too long. Shutting us out of additional acreage through road closures for flimsy reasons is not the answer."

"Hog Creek does need to be protected, but closing the road is not the only answer. Closing the Sunflower Flats Canyon road to protect the stream or reduce maintenance expenses on a road that hasn't been maintained in probably 40 years is ludicrous. That is just a lock-out. Fixing and 'storing' roads for UNF access only and setting up barricades to me is an in-your-face affront to forest users."

Buchholz said he and the other district rangers value the input of forest users like Kernan, but "after-the-fact" response is often a source of frustration.

"She cares about this place and that's a wonderful thing; I just wish we could get her in on the planning process. After the fact, it's difficult to make a course adjustment," he said.

"Ms. Kernan had ample opportunity during our planning process to voice her concerns," he said, adding that the planning process included postings on the Forest Service website, published notices in newspapers, town hall-type meetings and meeting with forest users out in the forest.

He also said they soon will be starting the same environmental analysis process with Kahler Basin, in the southwest area of the district.

"It's her right as a citizen to do whatever she wants with petitions and such. In the future, I would say to pay more attention to our website, get involved on the ground floor, take part in the process."

"There are 360 million Americans out there, and we can't get them all. We try as best we can to inform as many people as we can. We really do value people's input."

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Relay For Life began in 1985 with one man who walked and ran around a track for 24 hours and raised \$27,000 for the American Cancer Society.

This year, Relay For Life will take place in nearly 5,100 communities in the United States and 20 other countries.

Catholic parishes present life of Columbanus



The cast of "The Story of Saint Columbanus" rehearses. —Contributed photo

St. Patrick's and St. William's Parishes will present "The Story of St. Columbanus" to kick off the annual St. Patrick's celebration next week.

"The Story of Saint Columbanus," a three-act drama, was written and directed by Father Gerry Condon. It will be presented Sunday, March 10, at 3 p.m. in the Lone Community School cafeteria and Thursday, March 14, at 7:30 p.m. in St. Patrick's parish hall.

Columbanus, meaning "White Dove," was born about 543 A.D. and died in 615 A.D. at the age of 72.

At an early age, he joined a monastery at Bangor, County Down, where he remained until about 40 years of age. Permission was granted for he and 12 other monks to sail to Europe, landing at Brittany. The group made their way to Annagray, where Columbanus founded a monastery in an abandoned Roman fortress in the Vosges Mountains. So many men became monks that he established two more monasteries. One was a Roman castle at Luxeuil.

Columbanus' strong belief in the church's moral teachings created a bitter

foe in Queen Brunhilda, as she defended her grandson Theuderic's immoral lifestyle.

"For the rest of the story, attend one of the performances," says one of the cast members.

The cast and crew of the drama are members of St. Patrick's and St. William's parishes. Refreshments will be served at each performance.

There is no charge for the performances, but a free-will offering will be accepted and will be divided between Heppner Day Care and Lone Creative Care Preschool.

A View from the Hill

By Doris Brosnan

The robins are back. So, counting on these harbingers and on the wisdom of groundhog Punxsutawney Phil, the Terrace community looks forward to early spring-like weather and soon viewing an abundance of green things sprouting in their flowerbeds. With February's challenges (winter illnesses) and high notes (opportunities to celebrate) behind them, they embrace the promises of March.

Many residents did not elude the various "bugs" of the virulent flu season, so many scheduled activities did not take place for quite a while. Health and spirits are again strong, though, as are hopes that next winter's annual events will return to great success.

Since residents seem always eager for and capable of conversation, the morning discussions in the common area have remained lively.

When, on Feb. 8, the Boy Scouts celebrated their 1910 origin, several residents reminisced about their memberships and/or their brothers' scouting experiences.

The Chinese New Year began on the 10th, and the more the residents discussed that occasion with Kristie Taylor, the more questions they had for her, resulting in her research and three days of conversation. Of course, they all enjoyed learning what their Chinese-zodiac years of birth are, and what animals and personality traits represent those years. Not up to strenuous partying yet for Mardi Gras on the Feb. 12 or for dancing on "Dance for Health Day" on the 23rd, residents settled for some good "Looziana" (Louisiana) cookin' and for some reminiscing about dancing and dances in their pasts.

Observance of Valentine's Day and a birthday is always a must, though, so residents and staff were pleased to be able to celebrate both on Feb. 14. First, they enjoyed hosting the entertaining Heppner preschool children at a party. Then they were delighted to share birthday lunch with Liz Bueller and some of her family. Celebrating ended with a candlelight dinner.

February began with a hearty welcome to new-

est resident, Jerald Rea, a familiar face to all, and ended with a mystery. Feb. 28 is "Tooth Fairy Day." Evidence that just might support the existence of this fairy that some people insist is a myth: Nothing else seems to explain the appearance in apartments of new toothbrushes. Readers must decide for themselves....

Soon, decisions will be made about what the Terrace garden will feature this year. Jerry Baker has been cleaning up the garden space, and volunteers will, hopefully, soon till the spot for the first plantings. The first seeds could be in the ground by St. Patrick's Day or soon after.

Some residents are considering attending the new play that Fr. Condon has written for this year's kickoff on March 14 to Heppner's St. Pat's weekend celebration, and some will join family or travel

in the Terrace van to the Big Green Parade on the March 16. Bud Wilson will celebrate his birthday on St. Patrick's Day, so residents look forward to helping him celebrate his special day.

The Community on the Hill regrets that Anna Mae Steagall will not be with them to celebrate this year's Wee Bit O' Ireland.

Anna Mae passed away on Feb. 3. Staff and residents will miss the youngest member of their community, as will her friends at the St. Patrick's Senior Center. Seven residents were able to attend Anna Mae's services.

While waiting for their own flowers to bloom, residents have appreciated the flowers that brighten their common area, shared by Anna Mae's family members and the families of two other neighbors who have passed on but will not be forgotten, Dean Gilman and Jean Ann Turner.

Hand-crafted items featured here

Members of the Morrow County Creative Arts and Crafts will sell their hand-crafted items on Friday, March 15, from 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. and again on Saturday, March 16, from 8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m. in front of Les Schwab on Main St., Heppner.

Artists include Nancy Armon, who will sell hand-crafted purses and Gerry Armon, lamps. Dennis Wall

will feature his jewelry, which includes rings and pendulums made of polished stones, silver and copper and also wooden pens. David Williams will sell items made of leather and wood and Carmen Williams will feature crochet items and jewelry.

A nice variety of paintings, featuring different mediums, will be shown by Jean Adams.

Bookworm club shares joy of reading



The Heppner Bookworm Club donates books every year to the Heppner Daycare. A full grocery bag of new and used books are shared with children. Pictured are (L-R clockwise): Trevor, Hunter and Lily Nichols, Reece Gorbman, Chace Jones, Irellynn Kollman and Katie Wilson. —Contributed photo