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# Crater Chain Saw

## TRENDS AND OBSERVATIONS

# So beautiful to me

BY RAUNO PERTTU



*Rauno Perttu*

When the long-promised cure for Alzheimer's disease finally comes, it will be too late for my wife Jan. For years, in this age of medical miracles, we searched and waited for the promised new treatment that never came. At sixty, she still retains her wonderfully positive and cheerful attitude, but Alzheimer's has stolen almost everything else. Her initially gradual decline has turned into an accelerating and bumpy slide. The changes from last year are dramatic. The changes are now becoming noticeable from week to week.

From the time she was little, Jan was an avid and expert skier. Winter before last, she still skied. As last winter's season approached, I was certain we faced a rare argument. She would demand to ski, but I didn't believe she was up to it. To my surprise, she never expressed the slightest desire to "hit the slopes". Last year, we still took long hikes into the Siskiyou high country. This summer, she needed level, smooth terrain. Her former fast-forward walking was replaced by new gears—slow, slowing, and needs prodding. Even stairs have become a scary proposition.

Jan's ability to talk was an early victim of her disease, making verbal communication difficult. Over the past year, she has almost completely lost the ability to talk, and is also losing the ability to understand when talked to. Our quiet talks by the river have become very quiet. The simplest tasks have become too difficult. Her cheerfulness temporarily shatters and she needs reassurance after she is embarrassed by an Alzheimer's induced accident. These events are distressing to her, even though I assure her it's no big deal and quickly put it into the past. Alzheimer's seems to try its best to steal one's dignity.

This has almost certainly been our last summer of pretended normality—and she tries very hard to put her best normal face forward. I take her on geology trips when possible, and she goes through the motions of studying the rocks and the geologic setting in a convincing manner. I respect her role-playing and treat her as a working colleague, although it has become obvious she no longer comprehends. We both enjoy these trips, but the sheer mechanical difficulty of protecting and caring for her and completing my work is becoming too challenging.

At this twilight of Jan's life, I reflect on how much she has enriched my life, and how much fun and joy she has brought to our children and me and to

those who have had the opportunity to spend time with her. When we moved to the Applegate in 1987, she was a city girl. While our geology work and vacation travels often took us to very remote places, she had trepidation about actually living in the country. Furthermore, there was no geology work in the Applegate for her to tackle, and she liked being meaningfully busy. However, she quickly adopted the Applegate, and soon became involved in the community. As our son and daughter attended Ruch School, she became an active parent and dragged me to work parties and activities at the school. She was a classroom assistant and even PTA President helping to organize the planning and construction of playground facilities and bleachers at the school.

As clear-cutting in the Applegate became an issue, she teamed with other community members, including our esteemed editor, to form the Applegate Partnership and the Applegate

### Alzheimer's seems to try its best to steal one's dignity.

River Watershed Council. These organizations began to work with government agencies and community groups to introduce a broad spectrum of community input into the planning process of the agencies. Soon Jan became the first Applegate River Watershed Council Coordinator and was responsible for the dozen employees of the Council. In these productive early years of the Council, many trees were planted, enhancement projects completed, and many government projects modified. The Council received national recognition for its work and awards from the agencies. In the Applegate, if I was noticed, the follow-up was "Aren't you Jan's husband?"

When I pause to admire the summer breeze stirring the tall trees planted as tiny seedlings by her enhancement projects, including those I planted on our riverside property, I again realize how quickly time and our lives pass. The exciting new projects of yesterday have all too soon become the established Applegate scenery of today. When I see one of these now established projects, I can't help but remember all of the hustle, bustle and just plain fun shared by those working on and completing these projects. Jan was right in the middle of it all, with friendly persuasion and a ready laugh. I fell in love with that laugh. It now seems a world and a century away—and also just yesterday.

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- Some basics that your chosen Realtor should provide.
- Effective signing with riders that highlight special features of your home.
  - Good looking informative brochures and brochure boxes at your property which stay filled.
  - All brokers with your Realty Company should preview your home so they know what they are trying to sell.
  - Your home should be advertised regularly for exposure to prospective buyers.
  - Listing broker should communicate with you regularly about showings and reaction to your property.
  - Realty office should be close enough to your property so that any broker on floor time should be willing to jump in their car and take a prospective client to show your property.

These are the basics, any additional marketing items like Virtual Tours and Home Warranties which the broker provides makes your home more likely to sell quickly.  
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