

TRENDS AND OBSERVATIONS

LADY LOST

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her. With her sense of reckless daring, she volunteered to teach me to ski. I soon learned that she had additional noble attributes—patience and the ability to laugh with me, not at me. After many spills and much frustration (vocal by me and thankfully not vocal by her), she proclaimed me able to ski. In starting as an adult, I was adequate, but never graceful. She effortlessly streaked down the mountainside, with me trailing and doing my best to keep up. The fact that her ex-ski team friends would visit, and we would all go skiing, greatly improved my ability. They, of course, disdained the gentle slopes and dived onto the black diamond runs and ungrooved mountainsides. To avoid embarrassment, and out of vanity, I had to follow and try to keep up.

When we moved back to Oregon, Jan and I agreed to alternate ski vacations (her preference) with warm water vacations (my preference). However, I had developed a secret weapon. Our kids were growing older. I would ask them, “Which would you rather do, go skiing in the cold, icy mountains, or go play on a sunny beach with warm water?” I still feel a bit guilty that we spent many more vacations on warm beaches.

Because I could earn more money, and because she could spend more time as a loving and involved mother, we mostly moved where my work took us. Together, we lived in Hillsboro, Denver, Tigard, Hillsboro (again), Spokane, Salt Lake City and Coos Bay (I’m probably forgetting a place or two) before finally settling in the Applegate 25 years ago. We had checked many places for good schools, good climate, and a good living environment, and the Applegate rose to the top of our choices. We never regretted our decision.

At times, Jan was able to accompany me in my work. A couple of the companies I worked for paid her travel expenses, figuring they were getting a second geologist for free. At times, she had her own work. She worked in Portland for a foundation engineering company

that had her traveling to exotic places like New York City’s underground sewers (pre-functional). In Salt Lake City, she became the state’s nuclear waste repository expert. She was assigned the task of keeping the repository out of Utah.

Wherever we were, Jan was always involved in her community, and the Applegate was no exception. As our young children entered Ruch School, she volunteered as a classroom assistant, and volunteered us for numerous school-related tasks. She joined the PTO, served for a time as PTO president, and accomplished playground expansions and additions.

When she read of plans for very extensive clear-cutting of Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service lands in our area, she recognized the potentially harmful consequences. She understood that while clear-cutting may be effective in wetter, cloudier forests to the

north, with our dry, sunny conditions, thin soils and steep slopes, selective logging was more effective and much less damaging. She approached the agencies and got to know the key decision-makers. She met with representatives of groups on all sides of the clear-cutting issue. She recognized the need for a much better dialogue between the various agencies and interest groups, including those opposed to logging and those in favor. She also recognized



Jan Perttu 1950 - 2012

that a confrontational approach to the controlling agencies would not be nearly as effective as an educational approach backed by strong community support. She printed and distributed pamphlets, and organized and held countless meetings in an ultimately successful attempt to modify the planned logging, and helped to include community

input and science into forest-management decisions.

In the course of her meetings and discussions, she became aware of other groups and individuals concerned over the same issues. In her meetings with these various factions, she became a key founder of the Applegate Partnership, which strived to form a middle ground between the various interests and a broader forum where all the diverse ideas could be heard in a tolerant environment. The Applegate Watershed Council was formed as the working organization associated

with the Partnership. She became the first Applegate Watershed coordinator, a position she held for nine years. She helped raise substantial funding for a wide variety of watershed projects, and at one point managed the efforts of a dozen employees, several of them professionals. One of the projects she helped start was the *Applegater* newspaper—not only as a means of sharing information important to watershed residents but also to help build

a feeling of community.

The Partnership, largely because of the work of the Watershed Council, gained national recognition for its efforts, including visits by national political figures, and was used as a role model for many other watersheds nationally and even internationally. Jan received recognition and awards for her leadership. One she was fond of was the 1998 Salmon Enhancement Award from the Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries. I suspect she especially liked it because it was engraved on an interesting piece of slate, which seemed fitting for a geologist. In the Applegate, my name was “Jan’s husband,” that strange guy she allowed to follow her around.

Soon after we moved to the Applegate, Jan’s mother followed, buying a farm three miles downstream of us. When Jan’s mother developed Alzheimer’s, Jan, with periodic help from her sister, and with my support, helped her mother through some difficult declining years with the disease. When her mother died, doctors reassured Jan that she had a low chance (statistically about 20 percent) of coming down with the disease. We agreed that in many ways it was worse than cancer, and she expressed her horror at the thought of contracting the illness.

Eight years ago, we received the confirmation of Jan’s worst fears. I admired her strength in facing the future with humor and resolution. During the years of the disease’s progression, she remained strong and kept her sense of humor to the end. I will always love her for those qualities, which I’m unsure if I would be able to maintain if facing the same situation. She will be fondly remembered by those of us who knew her. Others, who never met her, will nevertheless see an Applegate Valley today that is different and better than it would have been without her.

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In the Applegate, my name was “Jan’s husband,” that strange guy...

Long-time forest service hotshot Hugh Leslie dies

The Siskiyou Mountains Ranger District and the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest are deeply saddened by the loss of former forest service employee Hugh Leslie. Hugh started his career as a hotshot (specially trained wildlands firefighter) at Star Gulch in the Applegate Valley in the mid 60s. In addition to his firefighting duties, he spent his entire career as a timber sale administrator for the Star Ranger District. Hugh was a close friend to a number of forest service employees and retirees and he will be missed by all.

At the time of his death, he was picking up a radio and keys to volunteer at the historic Dutchman Lookout, something he was very excited about.

Hugh is survived by his wife, Kay

(also a former forest service employee); son Ross Leslie (wife Tracie, three children) of Rogue River; daughter Tricia Deller (husband John, one child) of Jacksonville; stepson Steve Straube (wife Donna) of Upper Applegate; stepdaughter Sue Snaveley (husband Cliff Snaveley, Siskiyou Mountains Ranger District employee) of Applegate; stepdaughter Debbie McGuire (Medford District Bureau of Land Management employee, husband Del) of Ruch; and stepdaughter Audra Feeback (husband Mark) of Redding, California.

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Hugh Leslie, retired firefighter and timber sales administrator for Star Ranger District. Photo courtesy of Barb Mumblo.

Excerpt from Jim Labbe tribute to Jan Perttu

Jan was someone with an inherent sense of her own significance and ability to make positive change in the world. Yet she simultaneously embodied the C.S. Lewis definition of humility, a state of “not thinking less of yourself but thinking of yourself less.”

Read the complete
tribute online at
www.applegater.org.


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