Cold Weather Shelter closes for season

By Sue Stafford
Correspondent

The Sisters Cold Weather Shelter closed its doors for the season on March 15, despite continued snow and cold temperatures. With only three churches agreeing to house the shelter, it wasn't possible to remain open longer.

The goal of the shelter is to be able to be open from November 1 through March 31, but that would require two more churches or other organizations to volunteer their space for a month. The other possibility would be to find a permanent facility. The churches currently opening their doors to the shelter are Westside Church, Sisters Community Church, and The Episcopal Church of the Transfiguration.

Aside from the shorter season, everything else about this winter's shelter received stellar marks from everyone involved, including the guests.

The consensus at their last dinner together was that the Sisters community is remarkably non-judgmental and supportive.

Chops Bistro had volunteered to provide dinner that evening, as had 12 other restaurants throughout the winter. Instead of taking the food to the shelter, the 11 guests were invited to come into the restaurant for a sit-down prime rib dinner.

Zoe Schumacher, a member of the shelter advisory committee, reported that she began to see the community caring about the shelter guests and they would ask how particular guests were doing if they weren't around for a while. She also said she can tell the difference in guests between when they are housed in the shelter rather than outside.

Betty Shuler, another committee member, shared the story about the checker at Ray's who paid for $60 worth of groceries for the shelter when the gift card wouldn't process correctly.

According to comments around the table at the season-end meeting, the volunteer monitors who host the shelter from 5 p.m. to midnight every night are the heart of the organization.

Shuler referred to their demeanor as "so gracious." Roger Nelson of The Episcopal Church of the Transfiguration remarked, "The monitors were outstanding this year."

People were housed 121 nights, with every shift filled (two shifts per night) except for one half-hour in December, according to Mandee Seeley who manages the online signups.

Shuler reported that 67 individuals brought meals for those 121 dinners and breakfasts. A few of the volunteers, like Crystal Stevens and her family, brought a substantial number of meals. Like others, she and her family would bring the meals and then spend time socializing with the guests. Restaurants, church groups, the Girl Scouts, and other organizations also helped with meals.

Sisters Park & Recreation District offered their showers for use by the shelter guests. For the last six weeks of the season, February 1 through March 15, 52 showers were taken. Before that statistics weren't being kept. A few guests had dogs and cats that were taken care of by volunteer host families since animals are not allowed in the facilities.

This year the shelter employed three individuals who staffed the midnight-to-7 a.m. shift, and it was a year of learning for everyone involved. Once a communication tool was designed regarding meals, there was less confusion and things ran smoothly. The Shepherd's House shelter in Bend, which acts as the fiscal agent for SCWS, has been impressed with the success of the Sisters shelter in two seasons. They are particularly struck by the level and quality of community involvement.

Dedicated shelter monitor Blanche summed up her experience this season.

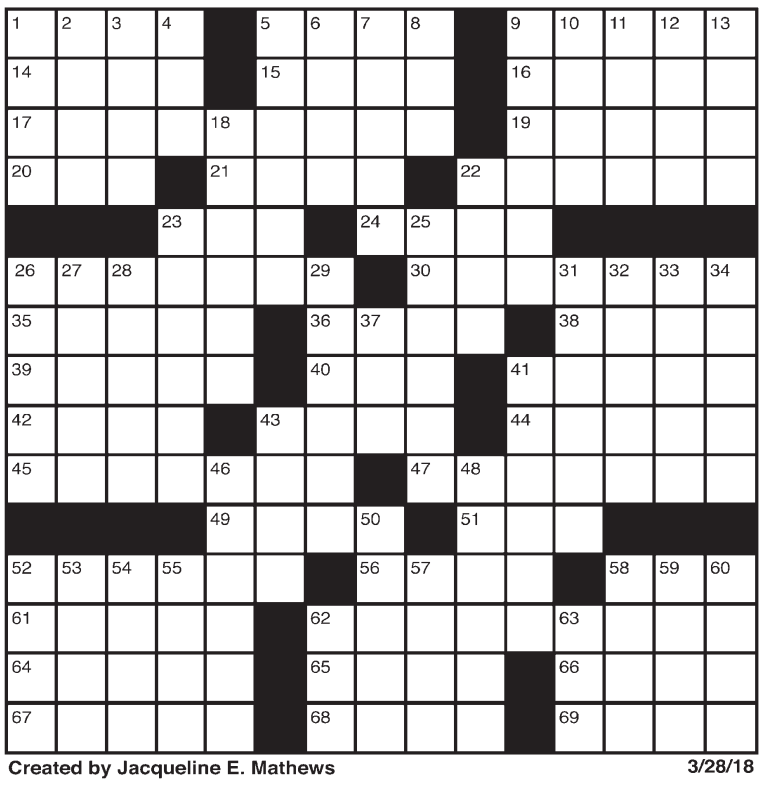
"It has been an honor for me to be with all the guests and hear their stories. I loved every single second of it," she said.

The advisory committee will spend the spring and summer months looking at some long-term goals as well as fine-tuning on-going operations.

As a way to recognize all of the people who volunteered their time, talent, and treasure to the shelter this year, there will be a volunteer appreciation potluck on Monday, April 16 at 5:30 p.m., Westside Church, 442 Trinity Way.

The Nugget Newspaper Crossword

By Jacqueline E. Mathews, Tribune News Service



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews 3/28/18

ACROSS
1 Go by, as time
5 Doe's mate
9 Plato's "S"
14 Beach resort in Venice
15 Party hat's shape
16 Infant's ailment
17 Fancy
19 Not sleeping
20 __ for; request
21 Skelton and Buttons
22 Ice skate supports
23 Years lived
24 Play area behind a house
26 Singing voice
30 Make inoperable
35 Workers' group
36 Commanded
38 Thin
39 Passage near the nasal cavity
40 Stop __ dime
41 Mr. Eastwood
42 Garden tools
43 Setting for "The King and I"
44 From this time
45 Bugs
47 Walk unsteadily
49 __ up; devours
51 Bullfight shout
52 Actress Hedy
56 Tried and __; dependable
58 Mrs. in Madrid
61 Step __; get out of the way
62 Down-to-earth
64 Actor Tony __
65 Costa __
66 Freeway division
67 Retailer's pitch
68 Unwrap
69 Actor Stoltz

DOWN
1 Tearful request
2 Feels sick
3 Pierre's state: abbr.
4 Weep
5 Window covering
6 Frog's cousin
7 Nervous
8 Seventh letter
9 Overcooks milk
10 Dubuque, __
11 Pleased
12 Voice amplifier
13 High cards
18 Liver and heart
22 Soft cheese
23 Waken
25 Gomez __; role for John Astin
26 Cold rice with fish
27 Potato salad ingredient
28 Forest trees
29 Woodwind player
31 Assert without proof
32 Human __; mortal
33 Knight's spear
34 Go into
37 Santa __, CA
41 Alpine cottage
43 Night twinkler
46 Trix or Kix
48 Tropical bird
50 Undress
52 Boys
53 "Stat!" in the office
54 Skirt for Twiggy
55 Sculptor's tool
57 Marathon
58 Sign of an old injury
59 Raja's wife
60 Sir Guinness
62 Expert
63 Suffix for text or infant

— Last Week's Puzzle Solved —

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