

Appeal Tribune

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Arrests made in church vandalism

Two teenagers face criminal mischief, burglary charges

Bill Poehler Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Two 15-year-olds have been arrested by Silverton Police in connection with the Feb. 10 break-in and vandalism of the Silverton Community Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Silverton Police declined to name either of the suspects as they are juveniles.

On Feb. 10, a window was broken in the back of the church. The vandals sprayed fire extinguishers throughout the church and tagged the property with graffiti including a swastika and anti-Christian messages.

Silverton Police stated the damage from the vandal-

ism cost the church \$110,108.16. All carpet and furniture in the church was damaged and will be replaced.

One of the two 15-year-old suspects was arrested March 16 and the other two days later in Salem.

One lives in Scotts Mills and the other in the Abiqua neighborhood of Silverton. Both are being held at the Marion County Juvenile Detention center in Salem.

Both youths have been charged with Criminal Mischief 1 and Burglary 2 and have had their preliminary hearings, according to Troy Gregg, the Juvenile Department Director for Marion County.

"Both are C Felonies," Gregg said. "The worst-case scenario is commitment to a youth correction facility."

The church was closed to services for a month while undergoing restoration.

It reopened for its first service since the break-in on March 17, though the clean-up is continuing.

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Fire extinguisher trails were part of the vandalism at the Silverton Community Seventh-day Adventist Church. The church was rendered temporarily unusable by the vandalism this month. PHOTO COURTESY OF OREGON CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

Disc golf course spins back to life



Ira Burgess throws off the renovated tee box on hole No. 2 at the refurbished disc golf course at Camp Taloali in Stayton. PHOTOS BY BILL POEHLER/STATESMAN JOURNAL

Volunteers rally to help restore, improve location

Bill Poehler Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

STAYTON – The disc golf course at Camp Taloali was unusable.

The course, built in 2008 on a portion of the camp for deaf children, was being used as a trash dump. Vegetation on the heavily wooded course had overgrown, and people were stealing the gravel that made up accents around the course.

It was in such bad shape players could hardly walk through it. The course was closed in 2016.

"There was nobody really in charge of taking care of the course," said Steve Moore, a disc golf player and board member at Camp Taloali.

Over the past two years, a group of volunteers came together to restore and improve the course and made it again a premier disc golf course in Oregon.

On March 24, the 18-hole course hosted the Next



Matthew Coll throws a disc off the renovated tee box on hole No. 2 at the course.

Grief Care Givers to help others heal

Christena Brooks Special to Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

So, you've experienced heartbreak. The death of a parent. A divorce. A miscarriage.

Maybe you're lucky enough to have initial support from your family, friends, church or co-workers. Maybe not. Either way, your journey through pain could be longer than expected.

Likely, your wadded-up emotions are untangling themselves on their own schedule, with new knots showing up at unexpected times and places.

What if you could get a long-term commitment of care from someone with counseling training and a big

heart?

Seven members of a Silverton church have completed five months of training and were commissioned this week as caregivers through Stephen Ministries, a Christian organization that has been teaching laypeople how to give "grief after-care" since 1975.

After 50 hours of training, these seven adults are ready to be matched, one-on-one, with members of the church or community who need company and comfort in their grief. They are among 600,000 people who've been trained by Stephen Ministries over the last four decades.

See **GRIEF**, Page 2A

Multiple cougars spotted in Silverton

Zach Urness Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Multiple cougar sightings in Silverton last week raised alarm bells and even led to the closure of The Oregon Garden.

In response, wildlife officials trapped and euthanized a subadult cougar March 18.

A second adult cougar also was seen in town, but officials aren't planning to trap or euthanize that animal at present.

"The cougar was euthanized because it was considered a public safety risk," Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife spokeswoman Michelle Dennehy said. "That basically means they've killed livestock, pets or have been seen repeatedly in broad daylight."

"Cougars are normally afraid of people, and if they're not, that indicates something isn't right."

The second cougar hasn't yet met that criteria, but Dennehy said anyone with additional sightings should contact police.

Cougars are becoming a more common sight in towns such as Silverton, which are close to a forested area and food, such as deer, Dennehy said.

Oregon's cougar population has rebounded from a low of around 200 animals in the late 1960s to more than 6,000 today.

That's led to more situations such as the one that occurred last Wednesday at The Oregon Garden. Tamara Swanson was walking through the wetlands area of the garden when she came across the subadult cougar, officials said.

Swanson told KOIN news that she yelled at the cougar and it fled. Officials closed the garden Thursday while they tried to capture the animal, but were unsuccessful.

In late February, the same animal attacked and killed a deer in a Silverton resident's backyard. The cougar later returned to the deer carcass.

Over the weekend, officials put a baited trap in the same area and captured the cougar overnight March 18.

When asked how she felt about how the situation was resolved and euthanizing the cougar, Swanson said:

"I am saddened to hear that any of these beautiful animals would need to be euthanized, but I do understand the need to protect the people, children and other animals in Silverton," Swanson said. "I would rather there be practices in place for relocation over euthanization."

A subadult cougar is described as having adult characteristics but is not yet sexually mature.

Encounters between people and cougars are rare; there has never been a confirmed attack by a wild cougar on a person in Oregon, Dennehy said.

"Seeing more cougars is part of a larger trend, especially in northwest Oregon, but people don't need to be alarmed," Dennehy said. "Just consider keeping pets indoors at night. If you do encounter a cougar, make yourself look big and don't run away from it."

Cougars were hunted to almost extinction in Oregon until 1957, when they were reclassified as a game

See **COUGARS**, Page 2A



Silverton resident Tamara Swanson took this photo of a subadult cougar at The Oregon Garden one morning last week. PHOTO COURTESY OF TAMARA SWANSON

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