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Star festival group shines for I.V. youth

By MICHELLE BINKER
Correspondent

Originators of last year's Shining Stars Festival have taken their project another step toward becoming a significant fixture in Illinois Valley.

The Shining Stars, a committed group of valley parents and community members, is now a private, non-profit entity. Its mission: to promote and organize the annual festival, which raises money to fund valley youth projects.

The new non-profit organization will organize volunteer efforts, community and business donations, as well as orchestrate fund-raising events throughout the year in order to produce the Shining Stars Festival in early summer.

"The Shining Stars is about the common ground of hope and aspiration," said Nicole Doran, volunteer coordinator for the group, and a board member. "We hope to be able to benefit children throughout the valley," said Doran.

"I was just struck by the joyful energy and exuberance behind the idea," said Gabriella Salas-Groth, a parent, festival activist, and hospitality coordinator. "Economically," she said, "the idea of a big festival once a year to draw a few thousand people into the valley sounds good to me.

"Especially if you can make it family friendly and have fun doing it," she said.

Last year's festival was a collaborative effort between parents, community and business members. Festival organizers even secured a grant from Illinois Valley Commu-

(Continued on page 8)

Court date set for Busk

Josephine County is taking an O'Brien man to court to stop him from turning his 2-acre lot off W. O'Brien Street into what neighbors have described as "a junkyard."

County Legal Counsel Steve Rich sought a preliminary injunction against Richard Busk, according to court papers filed Dec. 17.

Busk, who was served the court papers through certified mail, is scheduled to appear in local circuit court on Thursday, Feb. 6.

Rich said that the county's legal action was in response to complaints from neighbors. County officials investigated the complaints; and, according to affidavits filed with the court, found the large accumulation of building supplies, furniture, junked cars and other stuff to not only be illegal, but a public health hazard as well.

Cleanup at Busk's former 7902 Takilma Road property - which the county now owns -- where a large collection of discarded tires caught fire in June, is estimated to cost the county at least \$85,000.



Bridgeview Community Church group (photos above) participated in a week-long mission to Mazatlan, Mexico. Along with other organizations, they offered various services to those in need, including construction of a church foundation, dental care, and food and clothing distribution. Additional photos on page 8. (Photos courtesy of Walter)

Bridgeview group on a mission Church members find week-long trip an eye-opening labor of love

Six teen-agers and three adults from Bridgeview Community Church in rural Cave Junction participated in a week-long mission to Mazatlan, Mexico, and found the trip to be an eye-opening labor of love.

On the trip were Pastor Charlie Bridges, youth pastors Ken and Becky Loudon; and youth group members Alisa Richards, Tami Wilson, Scott Warren, Melissa Lawrence, Joy Messerli and Ricky Butts.

The group, which raised its own funds for the trip, left home in Illinois Valley on Nov. 1, when the temperature was below freezing. Upon arrival in Mazatlan, they walked into 88-degree weather with 75 percent humidity. After gasping a bit at the heat and humidity, the participants then faced transportation in a foreign country.

The group eventually got used to riding in vehicles called pulmonias, which resemble oversized golf carts with open sides and a canopy. They rode primarily on the rear of a flatbed pickup truck to reach the areas where they taught, played, fixed meals and built in conjunction with the church at Urias, La Viña, with which they partnered.

Also on the mission was a dental group from Washington state. Some members of the Bridgeview group assisted the dentists as best they could.

The youth and their chaperone leaders also found it difficult to comprehend the poverty of many of the people

they met.

The group noted, "It was heart-wrenching to know that the people you spent the day with would be staying in their tarpaper shacks, without electricity or running water -- while we were going to a hotel with air conditioning and showers. The contrast between the colonia and the tourist area was like night and day."

Among the meals they served was a lunch of pancakes with syrup, oranges, an Oreo cookie and juice. Said the Bridgeview group, "The people who received meals were so grateful. For some, this was the only meal they had to eat for the day. When everyone had received a meal, the empty plastic containers were given to some of the mothers to take home. Nothing was wasted."

Another part of the mission was pouring the foundation for a new church in an area without one.

"Using water from a large tank that had been brought in the flatbed pickup, we mixed cement and other ingredients on the ground with shovels," said the group. "We then carried the concrete in five-gallon buckets to pour into a form."

The group distributed toys and clothing, which they had brought in suitcases. "It seemed like so much," said the Bridgeview group, "until we began handing it out. We ran out before everyone had received something. It was difficult to see young faces waiting in line, and to know that we

had nothing left for them. The need is great."

However, at another location, the group found that its six remaining suitcases of clothing and toys was enough for everyone to receive at least one item.

Throughout their week in Mexico, the Bridgeview Community Church Youth Group and leaders continued their work of building, feeding, playing with children, and assisting the dental group.

In addition, the group helped paint a school at Tres Colonia.

"We were so busy that our trip was over before we realized it," said the youth group. "We worked hard all while that we were there, but did find time for a little fun, including swimming in the warm ocean water."

In conclusion the group said, "We had our whole trip planned. But as soon as we arrived, God showed us that he had another plan. His ways are so much greater than ours. We never would have guessed that we could be so hot, sweaty and tired -- and yet so happy at the same time. Each of us has the desire to return as soon as we can.

"We can't wait to see what God has planned for us next!"

(Editor's Note: The preceding article was adapted from the December issue of "The Body Works!" - a publication of the Illinois Valley Christian Women's Fellowship, by Bobbie Blakely).

2003 starts off with bang

By BRITT FAIRCHILD
Staff Writer

Two alcohol-related incidents kept the Illinois Valley Fire District busy New Year's Eve.

And "weird lights" in the sky on Thursday, Jan. 2 also kept I.V. volunteers and staff on the move.

At 9:35 p.m. on Dec. 31, the district's rope rescue team responded to a report of a vehicle over an embankment in the 400 block of Little Grayback Road out Caves Hwy. The vehicle was approximately 40 feet down a hill.

Chief Kyle Kirchner said that the four passengers in the vehicle were on their way home from a party. Two of them exited the vehicle on their own, he said, and returned to the party to phone in the accident.

The rope rescue team extricated a third person and helped the fourth up the hill.

Two of the passengers were transported to Three Rivers Community Hospital in Grants Pass.

I.V. firefighters also responded to a roll-over accident at 10:55 p.m. at Bridgeview and Takilma roads.

A more mysterious emergency occurred two days later, on Jan. 2.

At approximately 2 a.m., firefighters were called out to somewhere southeast of Cave Junction to determine the source of what appeared to be extremely bright lights flickering on and off, said Fire Marshal Jerry Schaeffer.

He added that he first thought it was a fire. However it was later determined that the glow was caused by electrical conductors being down at three different locations on top of Scott Mountain and a three-pole structure down on the Cave Junction side.

As of 3 p.m. that day, more than 1,720 Northern California residents in Happy Camp, Hamburg, Scott Bar and Seiad were without power.

According to Schaeffer, power was restored the following day.

'Learn something new,' says I.V. Community Ed. Coordinator Pam Cooper

As the new Training Services Coordinator for the Illinois Valley Community Education program for Rogue Community College, Pam Cooper has a new motto: "Learn something new."

Cooper, former managing editor of "Illinois Valley News," began her new role with the college in early December, and is working on a roster of classes for the spring term, which begins March 31.

"Community Education is a series of non-graded, non-credit classes available to adults 18 and older," Cooper said.

Cooper said she feels this job is a natural for her because she is a "people" person.

"We have an incredible number of fascinating people right here in our valley," Cooper said. "I like to network, find out what's new, what people need and want, and connect people who are looking for and have information, services or things."

Cooper said that Community Education is not just about learning how to do something in your spare time.

"It's learning something that may factor in later as job or self-employment opportunities," she said.

"The key word is 'opportunity' and how we handle all the opportunities

and possibilities that are laid before us every day," she said.

Based part time in an office in the RCC Belt Bldg. in Kerby, Cooper's office hours are 10 a.m. to noon Mondays and Wednesdays. She said that the program is year-round, and that although the Belt Bldg. is the primary site, classes could eventually be held throughout the valley - something she hopes to see.

Approximately one year ago, RCC took over the Community Education program from the Illinois Valley Community Response Team (IVCRT), which agreed to a two-year grant to help jumpstart the program.

"RCC has a better resource base in many ways to take on this program," said Cooper. "IVCRT got the ball rolling. Now that the program is affiliated with the college, maybe it will put down deeper roots. But budget cuts are happening all over the state. This community education program is self-sustaining; it must pay for itself."

Cooper said that anyone interested in teaching, or taking, Community ED classes should phone her at 592-2120. Class schedules and registration forms are available in the lobby of the Belt Bldg.

New 'Noose' Deadlines

Display Ads, letters, announcements, news releases - Friday, 3 p.m.

There will be a late fee (50 cents per column inch) for display ads turned in after the deadline until Monday, noon.

Headline bloopers: Man found dead in cemetery.