

10 minutes with...



Jan Meikle

Vicar (semi-retired) of St. Matthias Episcopal Church
Age: 61
Lived in Illinois Valley: 2.5 years

How did you become a vicar of the church?

I'm an Episcopal priest. I went to seminary in 1989 and got ordained in 1991. I had my own church for seven years at St. Stephens of the Field in San Jose, Calif.

Why did you choose Cave Junction?

My husband and I were ready to retire. We had been to Cave Junction several times and decided to look at property. We found five acres of land, and the next year we started to build. We're making our house big so we can invite a lot of people to come and I can have women's retreats there.

How many members do you have in the church?

Ten active people. In the 1950s this was a thriving regular church. I don't know how the numbers dropped over the years because I wasn't here. We meet every Sunday and I'm here twice a month to do communion.

Is it tough to run a church with so few members?

Yes it is. Financially, especially. But everybody is involved in what we do here. All the holidays are celebrated with great church style and we do what we can do together. We really try to serve each other as well as the community.

Are there other churches in the area with so few members?

I think we're the lowest (laughs). The Lutherans, Episcopalians and Methodists, we all work together so that when there is a church holiday we cooperate and do things together. We have wonderful collegiality.

Why did the church start the soup kitchen here two days a week?

It started years ago. I don't know the history. Somebody just decided it might be a good thing to do and started doing it. People donate food from all over the place. Bankers, policemen and firefighters all come to work in the soup kitchen so it's really a community effort. It's amazing the number of people that volunteer. We generally serve between 30-50 people.

Do you usually serve the same people each week?

Yes. The homeless come all the time. There's children that come... Last Christmas we draped clothes over the backs of the pews for people to take. There was a little girl who came in with three dresses on, and that was all, and it was freezing. I saw her and said 'I think there is a jacket here that will fit you.' And her mother just burst into tears. We found a jacket to keep the little girl warm, and she was just thrilled. Those kind of stories make it worthwhile.

If you weren't a vicar what would you be doing?

I'm sort of ready to retire, but not quite, so I would probably be helping at the soup kitchen and taking in people that we know that need a place to live for a while, people that just need to get away. That's why we're building a big house.

What are some of your hobbies?

I walk a lot. I like to take part in the things that happen at the I.V. Senior Center like yoga and stuff like that. I'm a member of SETI (Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence). That's important to me. I'm also a member of the Nature Conservancy.

Do you think there are other types of living beings out there in outer space?

Yeah. Creation is much too big and broad to think that we're the only ones. God is bigger than just the Earth.

What do you like about living in Illinois Valley?

The small-town atmosphere and friendly people. Where I live I can walk out in the woods and enjoy nature.

Are there any recommendations you would make to people new to the valley?

Get involved. People are so open and friendly here. I find that you can talk to almost anybody and end up with a friend. The first year we were here somebody had a party (on my street) and we all got together and had a wonderful time. From that, we have made a lot of friendships.

What do you think about the national gay and lesbian issue that was in the media about the Episcopal Church hiring a gay bishop?

The Episcopal Church always wants to be in a dialogue. We try to be accepting. We're called by our faith not to be judgmental. No matter what, we treat people with loving kindness.

For the most part is the Episcopal Church liberal or open-minded?

It depends where you are in the country. The East Coast is conservative and the West Coast is more liberal. I've lived in both places and I prefer the liberal, less-judgmental type of church.

What's your favorite flavor of ice cream?

Butter-pecan in a sugar cone.

— Interview by Steve Fairchild

IVCRT Insights

By Ron Phillips

Several very happy Kerby residents were in attendance Wednesday evening Aug. 20, when the Josephine County Board of Commissioners announced its decision to approve the petition to form a Kerby Water District.

With the district now officially formed, the real work of getting water to Kerby can begin.

A meeting with Clem Singer, a U.S. Dept. of Agriculture (USDA) representative, is already scheduled for the first week in September and a newsletter will go out soon announcing that there is still time to join.

Thus far, the new district is comprised of 64 members but with the formation of the water district, it is expected that more Kerby homeowners may decide to join since the cost of joining the district after the funding is secured will cost more.

The first meeting of the Oregon Caves Outfitters Oversight Committee was held in August.

Established as a means of increasing communication with general members, while providing greater accountability to the community, the committee is comprised of three general members, (Len Lea, a retired Hewlett-Packard executive, Kenny Houck, local entrepreneur, and Mort Mondale, a retired labor organizer), and two board directors (Al Devine, vice president of marketing for Evergreen Bank, and Robert Schumacher, a retired CPA), giving the committee a sound base of talent and business experience.

Regular committee business will include a report from the general manager, Joe Dean, on the financial situation, personnel changes, minutes from the Safety Committee, projects being planned, problems encountered and actions taken.

Following is a summary of this month's report: Sales through July are already close to matching total seasonal sales in 2002 and it is expected that projected goals for increasing revenues in 2003 by 30 percent will be surpassed.

Labor ratios -- expressed as a percentage of department sales -- and considered to be one of the critical indicators for measuring performance in a service industry business -- are also on target.

Gift Gallery sales from local arts/crafts items sold on a commission are on the rise from 13 percent to nearly 18 percent, and more souvenir items and food products are being sourced locally helping us meet our goal of using the concession to market area products.

With school having began, several Oregon Caves Outfitters (OCO) employees will leave in the next few weeks.

This natural attrition will help balance the staff levels with the lower volume of business that's expected after Labor Day.

Ten OCO employees have opted to purchase supplemental health insurance facilitated by the OCO.

The non-retaliation clause -- adopted by the CRT Board so that staff would feel more comfortable bringing forward personnel issues -- will be re-emphasized in the next staff meeting.

A "thank you" event is being planned for OCO employees to reward all their hard work and increased proficiency they have shown in dealing with the huge upsurge in business during July and August.

A safety and environmental committee with representatives from each department meets regularly to identify safety hazards and take preventative actions to protect both employees and guests.

A fire drill was held with the Chateau safely evacuated.

Given that the Chateau is sided with bark and surrounded by forest, fire safety is an area of particular concern.

Thanks to our chef Chris and his fine crew, OCO is receiving a steady flow of compliments from its guest on the quality of the meals, attracting increasing numbers of diners from the region, and regaining the reputation for fine dining the Chateau Dining Room once enjoyed.

The seasonal nature of the concessions is such that July and August see the most activity.

With visitation dropping noticeably in September, a number of fun events are being planned to help boost activity at the Caves during the fall shoulder season.

In September, two events are being offered: a Natural History Weekend, presented in conjunction with the Siskiyou Field Institute on September 20, featuring two nights lodging, an interpretive hike, and a wine tasting tour; and a Wine Makers Dinner, featuring seven courses, paired with an

appropriate area wine.

A vintner will be on hand to offer wine commentary.

In October OCO will pair Wild River's brews with Taylor's Sausage for an Octoberfest Dinner.

A special event is also being planned for Halloween.

In addition, OCO is also offering a Fall package special for September and October.

The Oversight Committee will meet monthly through the end of the season and report back to the board at each business meeting.

The National Park Service committee has met in Oakland to review the bids submitted for the 10-year concession contract at the Caves.

Word on their decision is expected this month.

GP bank robber serves 20 years

A bank robber who hit Home Valley Bank in Grants Pass in January has been caught and is currently in jail.

Grants Pass Dept. of Public Safety detectives investigated the January incident and determined Jason Paul Wood was responsible. Wood fled the area with help from James Weinshrott and Matthew Jefferson, who were both arrested in August for first-degree theft and other charges.

Wood was arrested in South Dakota stemming from a robbery which occurred there in February. He was indicted on May 21 for second-degree robbery and first-degree theft by a Josephine County Grand Jury panel stemming from the January bank robbery.

Wood is currently serving a 20-year sentence in the Sioux Falls State Penitentiary in S.D. for first-degree robbery.

Country Breakfast I.V. Senior Center

- *Biscuits & Gravy
- *Pancakes
- *Eggs
- *Bacon
- *Sausage Links
- *Coffee, Milk, Juice

\$4.00 - Adults
\$2.50 - Kids Under 12
Saturday, Sept. 6 - 8 to 11 a.m.

BINGO

I.V. Senior Center

520 E. River Street

Daytime Bingo!

Come join the fun
Saturday, Sept. 13 - 1 to 4 p.m.
WINNER TAKE ALL!
3 game sheets - 25-cents
Giant Raffle - Tickets \$1 or 6-\$5
Snack bar open

OWN LAND?

MODEL OPEN HOUSE SATURDAY & SUNDAY 10 TO 4 SEE MAP BELOW

\$56,950
\$33.46 Per Sq.Ft.

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