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Jim Valentine and daughter, Amanda, stand by ravine where 'Yahtahay' was trapped.

Trapped horse dies despite heroic efforts

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Staff Writer

A horse, with a value of approximately \$20,000 — but priceless to its owners — died this week after getting stuck in a small ravine.

The 6-year-old quarter horse gelding named "Yahtahay" was missing from the home of Jim and Kathy Valentine on 5830 West Side Road for two-and-a-half days before it was discovered on Wednesday, Nov. 5.

A neighbor, Bob Jones, who had grazed cattle on the lot next to the Valentine's house, discovered the horse alive in a six-foot by three-foot ravine.

Jones ran to the Valentine's house and got the horse's owner, 16-year-old Amanda Valentine, to try and help him get the horse out.

The two discovered Yahtahay collapsed on its side beneath a ravine ledge overhang which kept the horse out of sight. The Valentines had looked in the area while searching for Yahtahay but couldn't see it because of the way the ravine had eroded.

Jones said cold water and debris backed up behind the horse forming a sort of dam. Jones jumped into the water and removed debris to try to free the horse.

"My feeling was that the horse had to be somewhere over there," Jones said of locating the horse. "I'm just sorry we couldn't be there sooner. The whole thing is that it was just too cold."

Josephine County Sheriff's deputies and Illinois Valley Fire District volunteers responded to the scene. A tow truck from Jerry's Towing was also called out to help free the horse. Jim Valentine, who owns Valley Tree Service, also used one of his tree-trimming trucks to help get the horse out.

Jim also said volunteer firefighter De Spellman put up a heroic effort jumping into the water to try to save Yahtahay.

It took approximately 45 minutes to free the horse.

Once Yahtahay was freed, he was covered with a blanket. However, the stress, hypothermia, and injuries, including a ruptured gut, was too much for the horse.

Jim said that losing the horse was heartbreaking, but the thought of Yahtahay suffering for more than two days in the ravine made it worse.

"It appeared that somebody might have stolen him," he said. "I wish somebody would have. At least he would be warm in a barn somewhere right now instead of being dead."

The Valentines and some friends said evidence at the scene, including broken fences and poles, showed that Yahtahay may have been running at full speed to try and flee from mountain lions or a bear.

Amanda said she saw mountain lions in the area the evening before the horse went missing.

"An animal just does-
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New digs for LBMS to be dedicated

On Wednesday, Nov. 19 at 6 p.m. the Three Rivers School District (TRSD) will hold a dedication ceremony for the new Lorna Byrne Middle School (LBMS).

The completion of the new middle school will come under budget. The Lorna Byrne project also includes the construction of a new Illinois Valley High School football facility located on IVHS property.

The dedication of the new school will be the culmination of \$24 million in capital improvements that are being competed throughout the district since voters passed the bond in 2000.

Nearly 50 percent (more than \$11 million) of the bond projects were done in Illinois Valley at Lorna Byrne, Evergreen Elementary, and IVHS.

These projects include air quality improvements, new flooring, parking lot upgrades, new roof, electrical upgrades, improved heating systems and many other renovations.

Dave Toler, TRSD board chair said that Nov. 19 will be a "very special day for the people of I.V. The new Lorna Byrne school is a fine facility, second only to Grants Pass High, in Josephine County. This will be a very good day for the community."

Toler noted that there were many community members responsible for the new school, including members of two citizen planning committees, a design committee made up of Lorna Byrne staff and community members and a Safe School campaign committee that worked hard to get the bond passed.

"But we can't forget the most important partner in achieving this beautiful facility-- the voters. It was the voters throughout the district who said 'Yes, I will spend my limited resources to ensure that our kids are in a safe school that can provide them the learning opportunities they will need to succeed in the 21st century.'"

"I believe that the impact of this new facility goes far beyond these new walls. This state-of-the-art facility embraces a promising vision for our community that we can see in other improvements taking place in Downtown Cave Junction, including the rock landscaping and several upgraded businesses," he continued.

The dedication will feature tours of the new school. Refreshments will be served.

CJ council raises city land use fees

Cave Junction residents will pay more for land use permits beginning on Nov. 26.

City Councilmen approved a resolution during their Monday night, Nov. 10 meeting in city hall to reassemble the city's land use permit types into four categories, from simplest to most complex.

Type I applications now include items such as fence and minor sign permits, whereas subdivisions are now considered Type IV applications.

The increase, the council explained, is to help cover the city's actual cost for processing the applications.

Despite some dissension among councilmen about increasing certain fees, they agreed to raise the \$10 fence permit to \$20 and raise the permit for a new driveway from \$20 to \$50. A zone change permit will now cost \$395 instead of \$600. An annexation permit will now cost \$600, up from \$415. The cost of a subdivision permit will rise from \$500 to \$1,500, plus engineering costs.

The council also unanimously approved a zone change from single family residential to multiple family residential for Virgil and Joanne Lemley for a .55-acre lot located at 131 North Junction Ave.

To help protect pedestrians, the council also decided to make the Lister Street and Kerby Avenue intersection a four-way stop.

Currently, only those driving on Kerby Ave. are required to stop.

Mayor Ed Faircloth added, however, that he will give the public a 30-day notice of the new configuration and will test it for 90 days before deciding if it will remain.



IN MEMORY OF VETERANS -- Members of the American Legion Post 70 and the American Legion Auxiliary Unit 70 celebrated the memory of veterans on Tuesday, Nov. 11 at Cave Junction City Hall with a memorial wreath, patriotic music and flags. Related photos on page 9. (Photo by Steve Fairchild)



ANGEL OF COFFEE -- A new carved wooden angel was placed atop of Coffee Heaven in Cave Junction on Thursday, Nov. 6. Illinois Valley artist Dudley Douglas carved the angel out of the same piece of Douglas fir he used to carve the coffee house's first angel which was stolen in February. The new angel weighs 250 pounds and is more than 6-feet tall. Illinois Valley Building Supply provided a fork lift and driver to help lift the angel onto the roof. Related photos of the event are on page 8. (Photo by Steve Fairchild)