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Illinois Valley firefighters and American Medical Response medics work hard to assist the injured.



Selma center offering multitude of activities

By MICHELLE BINKER
Staff Writer

The Selma Community and Education Center (SCEC) is bustling with activity these days.

Are you looking for a volleyball game? Or yoga classes? How about an ethnic dinner and music? Pancake brunch? Movie night?

SCEC offers a place for all these activities. Anyone with an idea for a get-together is welcome to rent space and have fun.

"Opportunities abound," said Bill Hunt, the center's director. "We're striving for a diverse program."

January's schedule is jam-packed with fun. Yoga classes are held Tuesdays and Thursdays from 4:30 to 6 p.m. with a \$5-7 sliding-scale fee. A yoga class for seniors is held Thursdays from 3 to 4:30 p.m. with a \$3-5 sliding-scale.

Movie night will begin Wednesday, Jan. 14, with free admission to a family movie and snacks for sale. The show starts at 8 p.m.

On Saturday Jan. 17, the first of a planned series of ethnic celebrations will kick off with a Greek New Year party. Beginning at 6 p.m. there will be "great

food, music, Greek dancing lessons and fun." A Cajun party is scheduled for Mardi Gras in February, and celebration of Welsh Saint's Day is on track for March.

The Northwest Earth Institute's discussion group on voluntary simplicity will begin Tuesday, Jan. 20 at 7:30 p.m. The eight-week course focuses on "finding inner peace without spending every penny you have," said Pamela Tenny, course facilitator and secretary for SCEC. The fee for this course covers the cost of the book and room rental. For information, phone Tenny at 597-2110.

Open volleyball starts Wednesday evening, Jan. 21. One need not be on a team to participate, but as teams form, Hunt hopes to organize a tournament

A swap meet and pancake breakfast are scheduled for Saturday, Jan. 24 at 9 a.m. At this time people can learn about classes and other offerings, meet instructors and sign up to participate.

For more information phone Hunt at (541) 415-1000.

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1 dead, 3 hurt in I.V. Airport plane crash

Investigation is under way as to why a twin-engine private aircraft crashed while attempting a stormy night emergency landing at Illinois Valley Airport, resulting in the death of one person and injuries to three others, all from Washington state, aboard the Piper Seminole.

Illinois Valley emergency personnel responded to a report of a crashed, upside-down airplane alongside Hwy. 199 at the south end of the airport on Thursday, Jan. 1 at 6:40 p.m. Shortly before, the Josephine County Sheriff's Office was advised that the craft was diverting to the airport, owned by Josephine County, for unknown reasons.

The dead person was identified as co-pilot Jeff McLain, 27, of Seattle. The injured were identified as the pilot, Mark Ritchie, 23, of Olympia; and passengers Jacqueline Westfall, 24, city of residence unknown; and Ruri Mirukani Unk, date-of-birth and city of residence unknown. Three of those aboard were flight instructors.

All three were said to be in critical condition at

either Three Rivers Community Hospital in Grants Pass, or Rogue Valley Medical Center in Medford. Slight improvements in their conditions were noted early this week.

Responding in force, sheriff's office deputies, I.V. Fire District personnel, and American Medical Response (AMR) were the first to arrive at the crash site on the west side of 199 alongside Rough and Ready Creek a short distance north of the bridge across the creek. Oregon State Police also responded. First on-scene personnel found Westfall outside the aircraft near the upside-down right side, and the three others still inside. McLain was dead at the scene. AMR sent three ambulances to take care of the injured.

The tail of the aircraft faced east, and damage to the craft appeared extensive. Some 100 yards west of the crash site, in a direct line with the downed craft, the tops of several trees had been damaged or sheared.

According to witnesses, the plane at first sounded as though it was having engine trouble.

Subsequently, as the landing was attempted, it appeared that the pilot tried to take off because of touching down too late to take full advantage of the full runway. In attempting to gain altitude and turn east for another pass at landing, the crash occurred.

New Year's Day plane crash near I.V. Airport under investigation.

Details are being investigated by the Federal Aviation Administration and the National Safety Transportation Board. Recordings of radio transmissions while in flight appear to be available.

After aiding in extrication and medical attention at the site, I.V. firefighters were asked to respond again a short time later in the form of the district's swift water rescue team. Members retrieved portions of the airplane that were scattered in the creek and on a small treed outcropping nearby, apparently in the path of the airplane as it went down. The crash site was secured by Josephine County Search

And Rescue prior to the plane and its parts being taken to an indoor location for safe-keeping and investigation.

The reasons for an emergency landing were not immediately known although it was snowing and raining immediately prior to and during the crash. During rescue operations only rain sprinkles fell, and there was a chill wind.

The craft was en route from Oakland, Calif. to North Bend, Ore., adjacent to Coos Bay, where refueling was to occur. The plane was then to continue to Auburn, Wash., where it had been leased by Auburn Flight Services of Auburn.

The fatality was the first at the I.V. Airport in several years, when a father and son died when they crashed during a take-off and landing practice.

(Editor's Note: Information for the preceding story came from Josephine County Sheriff's Office and its Emergency Management Office, Illinois Valley Fire District, eyewitnesses, other reports and on-site observations.)

Greatness knows itself.
- Shakespeare -



SNOW SMACKS VALLEY - A major storm dumped 6 to 10 inches of snow on Illinois Valley late last week, and substantial amounts were still on the ground this week with temperatures below freezing. The storm caused several power interruptions around the valley, as lines sagged and others were damaged by trees that fell because of heavy snow. Many businesses opened late on Friday, Jan. 2 because of difficulty in traveling. Interstate 5 was closed at Siskiyou Pass and the city of Yreka, Calif. had no motels or parking left for travelers. On the coast, areas including Crescent City, Brookings and Coos Bay were powerless for a time. Police recommend that people not travel unless absolutely necessary.



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New site on horizon for I.V. alliance

There's no question that there will soon be an Illinois Valley Safe House for abused women and children.

"We're nearly there," said Chris Mallette, executive director of I.V. Safe House Alliance (The Alliance), which began its efforts two years ago.

Currently, The Alliance is working toward a 5-acre parcel with an existing home within a 3-mile radius of Downtown Cave Junction. However, negotiations this week are in the process of offers and counteroffers, said Mallette.

To begin achieving its goals, The Alliance is working to raise \$55,000 by approximately mid-March to purchase a desired site. "If not one site, there are others," she said.