

Here, There, & Everywhere

HOLIDAY BASKETS - Distribution of toys and food under the Illinois Valley Christmas Basket program will be held Saturday, Dec. 16 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., said Celia Siemer, project coordinator. The Illinois Valley High School Choir will perform, and many community volunteers, as well as IVHS students, will help with distribution of items. All activities will be at I.V. Family Resource Center, 535 E. River St. in Cave Junction.

PLASMA PINTS - American Red Cross will take donations of blood Thursday, Dec. 14 at Illinois Valley Senior Center on E. River Street in Cave Junction from 1:30 to 6:30 p.m. Phone (800) 448-3543 to sign up or register. Donors also can show up without notification, as long as they are at least 17 and in good health.

CHRISTMAS MEAL - Cave Junction Cares is preparing for its annual free dinner on Christmas Day, Dec. 25 from 10 a.m. to noon at Jubilee Park in CJ. Besides the meal, Santa will be present. Recapping the Thanksgiving meal, founder and organizer Lynn Boucher said that 23 turkeys and 70 pounds of ham filled plates for all comers, as well as 400 servings of mashed potatoes and 10 gallons of gravy. "It was the best turnout we've ever had," she said, "more than double previous attendance marks." She said that an item in the "Noose" helped considerably.

NOTEPAD - "Noose" goofs: Last issue contained a couple of bloopers, both in photo captions. One read, "Jack Front," instead of Jack Frost. Another referred to a "Bomb Treat" instead of a Bomb Threat ... **A Christmas dinner** will be served to anyone without charge by Bridgeview Community Church from 1 to 5 p.m. on Christmas Day. Phone 415-1101 for more info or to arrange to have food delivered ... **New Year's Eve** will be celebrated by HASL Independent Abilities Center at Riverside Event Center in GP with a silent auction, hors d'oeuvres and a no-host bar. Phone 479-4275 for more information ... **A new book**, "V1-Rotate: An Action Novel about Airplanes and the People Who Fly Them," has been written by Grants Pass resident Russell L. Meek. More info is available from authorhouse.com ... **T-shirts**: *If you really love me, buy me a present. *Back off, I'm fragile. *I make up stuff. *I see stupid people. *You will all be my slaves. *I have no idea what you're talking about. And I don't care.

LAST WORDS - It is difficult to answer when one does not know the question. (Sarak of Vulcan)

Family Coalition, Xmas Basket Program seek help

Distribution of toys, food set for Dec. 16 at I.V. Family Resource Center in Cave Junction

By SCOTT JORGENSEN
IVN Staff Writer

Illinois Valley Family Coalition (IVFC) is working with other groups to ensure a merry Christmas for the less fortunate.

The Josephine County Food Basket program has been operating for nearly 30 years, and annually feeds approximately 2,600 families. Of the families aided by the program last year, 680 lived in Illinois Valley.

Celia Seimer, a case manager for the Oregon Dept. of Human Services (DHS), distributes food baskets locally as part of the program.

Seimer said that despite statistically low unemployment rates, Josephine County still has many needy residents.

"I'm seeing a lot that are underemployed," Seimer said. "For many people, it's just not a livable wage. Feeding a family of four on \$10 an hour is really difficult."

Donations for the food basket program will be accepted until Friday, Dec. 15 at IVFC, located in the I.V. Family Resource Center on E. River Street in Cave Junction. Families will pick them up the following day.

Aside from food, dona-

tions of blankets, gloves, hats and slippers also are encouraged.

"I take just about anything if I think I can get it to somebody else," Seimer said.

The second annual Caring Tree Program aims to help disabled and senior residents make their Christmas wishes come true.

Program participants put their gift wishes on heart ornaments that are hung on the Caring Tree. IFVC staff and volunteers purchase those items, and recipients will pick them up from Dec. 18 to 22.

Last year, 47 individuals sent their Christmas wishes, most of which were granted.

"We received almost \$400 in cash, and all of that was spent just for those Christmas wishes," said IVFC Executive Director Carol Rona.

Donations for the Caring Tree Program also will be accepted at IVFC until Dec. 15.

During 2005, the I.V. Christmas Toy Program helped approximately 350 families celebrate the holidays. The program continues this year, and serves a very useful purpose.

"The toy program run

by the coalition is intended to help parents have a little self-esteem in being able to give things directly to their kids," Ronan said.

"We allow parents to come get things for their kids, and they can wrap them up and give it to their kid when they otherwise couldn't afford to buy anything for them."

Seimer said that increased costs for toys have caused complications for the program.

"Our budget almost got cut in half due to the price of toys," Seimer said. "We're thrifty shoppers, but we're struggling to meet the need this year. I'm really nervous. The amount of toy donations we have at this point is about half of what we nor-

mally have."

Donations of new, unwrapped toys can be dropped off at IVFC or one of the toy collection bins around the area. Cash donations can be sent to: Illinois Valley Toy Program, attention Celia Seimer, 535 E. River St., Cave Junction, OR, 97523.

Ronan said that every year, she is overwhelmed at the generosity of residents.

"What's nice to us is we have a lot of people that come into our building that don't have a lot of income themselves," Ronan said. "It's amazing how many of them took hearts off the trees and tried to shop for those who they thought were less fortunate than them."

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State guard gains FEMA cash

Oregon National Guard will be fully reimbursed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), as promised, for the emergency assistance it provided to areas affected

by Hurricane Katrina.

Congressman Peter DeFazio held a press conference Monday, Dec. 11, to make the announcement.

Also attending were Brig. Gen. Mike Caldwell, commander of the Oregon State Defense Force; and Ken Murphy, director of Oregon's Office of Emergency Management.

DeFazio and the entire Oregon congressional delegation sent a letter to Acting FEMA Director R. David Paulison informing him of the shortfall the Oregon Military Dept. faced without FEMA's reimbursement. They urged him to remedy this oversight.

Because of the delegation's efforts, as well as a follow-up call to the Dept. of Homeland Security by DeFazio, the Oregon National Guard will be reimbursed in full.

Letters to the Editor

(Continued from page 2)

The dog was very hurt, but he was still alive.

The dog was very sweet and responsive to our care. My husband and I drove him to Dr. Joe's Pet Hospital. Dr. Joe Hoelzle, Jay and Kim showed their kindness, professionalism and dedication.

They put their hearts into saving the dog. They acted quickly to provide emergency care. We are fortunate to have people who care so much for the animals of our community. We appreciate their efforts. Unfortunately the dog didn't survive his injuries.

We also want to note the kind customers in Dr. Joe's office for their support and patience. As well, the caring woman who pitched in to pay for the care the dog received and the woman who stopped on the highway and helped move the dog off the road.

Everyone was hoping that poor dog would make it.

None of us knew the dog before; yet we were all affected by him, and we all put our hearts into caring for him. Amid such a horrible experience, it was reassuring to be surrounded by the kindness of our community.

Pet-owners should not allow them to run free where they may encounter dangers. It is their job to ensure pet safety. No one, pet or person, should have to go through such a terrible experience. People need to be responsible -- for their pets and the community.

'The shame of it all' due to administration
From Darlene Kirby
Cave Junction

The Baker-Hamilton Iraq Study Report has finally come out. Jim Baker and others have had all the informa-

tion since last April, but didn't want to release it before the election.

Today appears to be the beginning of the end. The end of what? I keep asking myself. The end of the American dream the founders of these United States fought for and worked so hard to secure for all of us?

The end of a war so heinous in its inception and reeking of lies, corruption, and greed that it sickens me to think about what some men will do to others for power and monetary gain?

The murders of thousands of Iraqis to satisfy their lust for oil revenues. Their lust for power over those who couldn't stand up to our military might and who laid down what arms they had thinking this administration was coming to save them from a ruthless dictator. Iraqis who now find themselves worse off than ever before.

Instead of going into Baghdad to serve the poor, we left the poor to fend for themselves, and have instead built a "Green Zone" for ourselves for our comfort with air conditioning, treated water and sewer systems that carry waste away from the streets.

The citizens of Baghdad are left with nothing. They have no electricity for air conditioning in 120-plus degree heat, no heat in the cold, no treated water and have raw sewage running in the streets that they have to walk through to reach home.

They have no jobs. We have given the majority of jobs to private contractors in no-bid deals that only benefit the rich like Halliburton, KBR, Bechtol, Blackwater Security and several others.

What are the Iraqi people to do but fight for survival?

They have lost hope, and anger opens old wounds. Before we knew it, tribal, ethnic and religious differences grew out of control. People who have lived and married into each other's families for more than 30 years are now killing one another, and many of our brave military as well.

We have become the axis of evil. We have become the tyrants. We have become the occupiers. We are building a Vatican-style 100-acre embassy compound in Iraq vs. the usual 10 acres in other countries. We are building four to five military bases, and we say we don't want to be occupiers. Where is the truth? Where is the logic?

Now we are told we should train the Iraqi troops to take our place. How? Our trainers don't speak the language. The Iraqis don't trust us. We don't trust the Iraqis enough to arm them. Perhaps what we need to do is give them jobs and the money that goes with the jobs to support their families and in the process give them hope and renew their confidence in us.

Let the Iraqis take back their country through the rebuilding of their infrastructure and their cities. It's time we tried a new tactic like winning their hearts and minds through compassion and kindness.

It's obvious that bombs and bullets aren't getting the job done. Instead of arming them and training anymore of them to kill, let them enjoy self-esteem and pride while rebuilding what we have torn down.

This war of choice has become an absolute disaster for the world. Our brave military has been betrayed by this administration. All of America has been betrayed. The shame of it all.

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