

'Thrivallist' Frank Cook advocates simple life

By JOSIAH DEAN
IVN Staff Writer

"They aren't quite ripe," Frank Cook noted of the yellow plums filling a tree off the deck of the Siskiyou Project office in Takilma on Friday, July 20.

As a self-styled "thrivalist," Cook pays particular attention to the plants and trees around him.

A group of nearly two dozen people had gathered in the shade on the lawn to learn more about Cook's life of "thriving, not just surviving."

Growing up on military bases, Cook described a childhood where "everything was taken care of much like a socialist society." After graduating with honors from Duke University at Durham, N.C., he felt that a traditional career would be "giving his life away," so he set out in a refurbished bus to "see the great world."

After living on the road for two years he had an epiphany. "I didn't want to just survive, I want to thrive," he recalled thinking. Since then he has lived a "life of donation" and as a teacher.

As he travels and speaks he encounters many people who have no money. Noting that he, himself, does not carry money, he observed that many people also have no energy. "Nothing to offer the world," he added.

Cook's teaching goals center on changing people's idea of money and to emphasize each person's contribution to the world. He encourages folks to look at things in a different way.

"The true state of the world is abundance ... so much is already in place. The air, water and the earth," he said. "The 'great spirit' however you describe it, provides enough for us and is willing to provide an abundance."

Problems arrive with the desire for money that tricks us into thinking about shortage.

He pointed to the plum tree. "In a third-world country when the fruit becomes ripe people will be in the tree picking the fruit to eat," he observed, "but in the first-world countries, fruit trees are often seen with fruit rotting on the ground."

"People put more value on their time working to make money to buy food at the store rather than taking advantage of the abundance that is all around them," he concluded.

Cook noted the irony that things that are more abundant have less value than those that are rare. As an example, he stated, "Air is everywhere and abundant and is therefore seen as not

having value while it is essential to our life. Money on the other hand is just paper, but has value because of its



Frank Cook

scarcity."

"Don't associate money with value of life," Cook cautioned, recounting a story of someone who traveled to Brazil. The person woke one morning to find money falling from the sky and the streets lined with bills of various denomination. As this person was scooping up the money, it was pointed out that because of hyperinflation the country was experiencing, the bills had no value.

Money does have value as a short-term instrument Cook conceded, but one must look to see what is one's true value to the world. When seeking that value in life, he cautioned, "Do not to be too specialized. Find exciting channels to explore them, but keep learning a variety of useful skills."

"As people come together to share their skills and ideas we won't know scarcity because there is so much abundance in the land around us," Cook stated. He then noted that nearly half of all food produced in the United States is thrown away.

According to Cook, Wal-Mart is now the nation's largest producer of organic food, but that local groups don't need to compete with it to realize abundant communities. He contrasted the life of 24-hour convenience stores and 500-channel TVs to meeting with the community to discuss the natural cycles of the land.

Cook observed that, "We need to scrutinize our needs and wants on a regular basis. Everything shifts with the seasons." He continued that modern-day life is based on linear time whereas Nature follows a more cyclical course.

Encouraging folks to minimize actual needs, Cook admitted, "I am not there." It is a continuing process. And while he feels content in the moment, he is looking to pool his resources for the future. He also stressed that organizations also can benefit from this simple-life philosophy.

For more information about Cook visit www.plantsandhealers.com

'Honest mistake' ends with variance approval

Cave Junction Council also hears from angry resident about vandalism

By SCOTT JORGENSEN
IVN Staff Writer

A setback variance due to an "honest mistake" was OK'd for a property in the Hanby Vista Subdivision by the Cave Junction City Council during its meeting Monday night, July 23 in city hall.

The property, at 307 Gamay Drive, was built by Jacksonville-based contracting firm K.T. Reich Inc. and is owned by John Dolph.

Approved plot plans for the single-family residence showed a rear setback of 11 feet. However, city documents state that a final inspection of the property revealed a 7-foot setback. City codes require that the setback be at least 10 feet.

On April 25, City Recorder Jim Polk sent a notice of noncompliance to K.T. Reich Inc. Kerry Reich, the company's CEO, responded in an April 30 letter. In it, he stated that concrete contractor Louis Paul erred when building a shop at the rear of the property.

"They should have checked it as it was their

responsibility to keep all foundations out of the setbacks no matter what," Reich wrote.

While Reich admitted to having incorrectly drawn the plot plan, "The city of Cave Junction plan review didn't catch it either and stamped it OK," he wrote. Reich also blamed the county, but took some responsibility for the oversight.

"Josephine County signed off on the foundation not noticing the setback problem. So we all dropped the ball," Reich wrote. "The house at 307 Gamay was built, finished, signed off and sold without anybody noticing."

In his April 30 letter, Reich went on to state that tearing down the shop "seems to be a waste," and that the setback violation "does not harm any of the neighbors and has no adverse effect on the subdivision in any way."

Reich repeated the refrain in a May 2 letter to the city's Variance Review Committee.

"Without question we

all missed the same problem, first me, then the city of Cave Junction, then Louis Paul Concrete, finally Josephine County," Reich wrote.

He added, "When plans are stamped and the inspections signed off, it says the job is correct. We pay no small amount of money for this service and use it as quality control, so when it fails we don't like being blamed as the sole problem as though we snuck this by the governing bodies that approve both the plan and the foundation."

During a public hearing on the matter during the council's July 23 meeting, Paul represented Reich and Dolph. Paul said that his firm did its work based on faulty plans provided by Reich's company, and reiterated that the county failed to catch the error.

Mayor Tony Paulson said that the city's code regarding setback is quite clear, and that the city would be "opening ourselves up to problems" by making exceptions.

Councilor Russell Ehr-

man said that the problem "looks like an honest mistake," rather than an attempt to circumvent the city's rules.

The council voted 4-1 to approve the variance, with Paulson dissenting.

Angry Citizen Hints At Vigilante Justice

Near the end of the nearly two-hour-long meeting, under Public Comments, an angry resident complained about what he sees as a lack of law enforcement. He is especially upset because his RV, he said, has been vandalized twice during the past several weeks, and he feels that Josephine County Sheriff's Office has not responded appropriately.

The man, identified as Robert Peckler, indicated that perhaps vigilante justice might serve his needs. The mayor told him that there is nothing the city can do, as citizens are unwilling to pay for extended law enforcement service.

Carolyn Fosmore, of Cave Junction, and Holger (Continued on page 13)



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