

Bob's Corner

It has long been my contention that those astonishing characters -- the antisocial types who spend time smashing other people's mailboxes and breaking windows, uprooting landscaping, breaking public benches, inflicting graffiti, slashing tires and generally acting like the village idiots -- should be ...

I forgot; this is a family newspaper, so I cannot state in print what I think should be done with them. But our community has its share of vandals, just as all other locales, and maybe they'll read this. Maybe.

I'm sorry to label them; that's not the best approach. So let me get these off my chest, and we'll proceed from there: Besides vandal, which truly defines those who steal, damage and destroy what's not theirs, we have hooligan, delinquent, ruffian, thug, lout, fool, criminal, lawbreaker, crook, offender, reprobate, and just plain wrong. I'm not going to use those terms; just wanted you to know they're available.

Perhaps all it would take for them to stop would be for one of those involved in such mischief, some of it criminal, to suffer an experience themselves. Maybe then they'd realize that not only should they not commit such acts of violence, but that they should counsel their buddies. One point I want to make here is that it's too easy to say "kids did it." Not true. Often those involved are way older than "kids."

Finding a broken window or discovering that your place has been illegally entered gives one a real nasty feeling. Most everyone will say that they "feel violated." Such incidents have made me feel sick in the pit of my stomach; my throat tightens; and I have felt raw anger. It's not a pretty picture.

When we lived in Bonita in San Diego County, someone entered our home through a bathroom window and stole a sterling silver pig filled with silver dollars. They also broke the shower head. While we were inside a music store in Pacific Beach, our vehicle was entered and items stolen. Someone took a big sack of cat food from our car when we lived in Poway. When we had to rent our home in Escondido after we moved to Oregon in 1979, a tenant ripped off a lot of our belongings.

In Brookings, someone burned our outgoing mail. This cost us a lot of stress, time and money, not only in late fees.

After moving to Cave Junction, and right after having our car detailed, someone "keyed" it at Grants Pass High School. The *Illinois Valley News* office has been broken into twice. Exterior vandalism, including apparent tree-haters, has occurred several times. The Shasta Fudge shop on our property recently was vandalized.

None of those incidents are pretty pictures either. Not a humorous column this week, unless you can tell me why vandals think that what they do is funny.



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Illinois Valley News

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Letters to the Editor

(Editor's Note: Views and commentary, including statements made as fact, are strictly those of the letter-writers.)

Typed, double-spaced letters are considered for publication. Hand-written letters that are double-spaced and legible also can be considered. "Thank you" submissions are not accepted as letters.

Underage drinking in I.V. From Chris Stauffer Selma

It is estimated that, nationwide, approximately 5,000 people die each year as a direct result of minors under the influence of alcohol. This does not include deaths from alcohol poisoning or long-term health problems attributed to alcoholism.

Underage drinking is especially prevalent in rural communities like Illinois Valley. Unfortunately, most federal or state funding allocated to Josephine County for underage drinking goes to Grants Pass, and Illinois Valley is largely neglected. Grants Pass programs like Alateen, an Alcoholics Anonymous group for minors, is open to Illinois Valley teen-agers, but transportation to and from Grants Pass is a major obstacle for most of them.

The U.S. Surgeon General recently acknowledged that underage drinking is a national problem in his *Call to Action to Prevent & Reduce Underage Drinking* (www.surgeongeneral.gov/topics/underageddrinking/).

Besides placing severe personal, social, and economic burdens on adolescents and their families, underage drinking affects entire communities. Among other aspects, it is extremely costly. In Oregon alone, taxpayers were burdened with \$697 million a year in medical costs, lost productivity, pain and suffering, and other costs associated with underage drinking and its consequences, according to the Pacific Institute for Research & Evaluation.

That translates to a cost of \$2,074 per year for each youth in the state -- money that would be better spent in areas such as education and health care.

Many teen-agers who drink alcohol began doing so before the age of 12, so prevention education is appropriate even at the elementary school level. More important than prevention education in the schools is the influence of parents and other adults in the community. In Oregon and nationally, research shows that parents who deliver clear, consistent messages have more influence on teens than most people think.

Even if parents drink al-

cohol themselves, laying down rules for their children is vital to the children's futures. Of adults who started drinking before the age of 15, around 40 percent say that they have signs of alcohol dependence, four times higher than for adults who didn't drink until they were 21.

For more facts about this topic and to learn more about what you can do to help Illinois Valley teens steer clear of underage drinking, visit www.faceitparents.com, an Oregon campaign to help reduce underage drinking, or dial (877) 553-TEEN for Oregon Partnership's free Alcohol & Drug HelpLine.

(Chris Stauffer is a third-year medical student from OHSU in Portland who just completed a five-week rotation in rural medicine with Dr. Kathy Mechling in Selma.)

'Devil in the details' From Richard Weaver Kerby

I am a Vietnam veteran who receives a modest V.A. pension check each month along with a Social Security check due to my 100 percent spinal cord injury disability.

Having Part A of Medicare, the V.A. authorized Medicare to hire and pay a home health agency from Grants Pass to care and dress my open wounds. I thought this was a good thing because my housemate had just moved to Medford temporarily, which was also a criterion of the V.A. Remember, Part A of Medicare covers payment for these home health nursing visits, but however not for lab work.

If labs by the home health nurses are needed to discover what bacteria is growing in a wound, then prior authorization is needed from a V.A. doctor and here lies the devil in the details, Getting authorization for treatment for lab work from a V.A. medical doctor is different than getting authorization of prior payment from the V.A. for this procedure. If both are not addressed prior to the lab work then a veteran may accumulate a substantial medical lab bill.

Medicare denies lab work to a Part A patient for home health agency purposes because it falls under the Medicare Part B category. The V.A. will deny any payment to a home health nursing agency that is not authorized for payment prior to treatment -- and guess who gets the bill? Correct, the veteran.

And as time passes, this bill if not paid becomes a lien against the veteran. If you are as assertive as I am you spin it back at them and call it what it really is, and that's fraud. According to my Medicare Summary Report, Medicare fraud is a false representation by a person or business to get Medicare payments.

A home health nursing agency which does not know how to acquire prior authorization from the V.A. is an oxymoron statement. They

Following are the high-and-low temperatures, and rainfall, recorded in O'Brien by Cheryl & Harry Johnson:

*Fri., Oct. 3	59	54	1.42
*Sat., Oct. 4	61	51	.71
*Sun., Oct. 5	64	50	.00
*Mon., Oct. 6	74	47	.00
*Tue., Oct. 7	65	50	.05
*Wed., Oct. 8	63	45	.00
*Thu., Oct. 9	55	34	.06

Following are the high-and-low temperatures, and rainfall, recorded in Cave Junction at Illinois River Farm:

*Fri., Oct. 3	59	54	1.46
*Sat., Oct. 4	60	51	.61
*Sun., Oct. 5	65	48	.00
*Mon., Oct. 6	77	44	.01
*Tue., Oct. 7	67	45	.05
*Wed., Oct. 8	65	44	.00
*Thu., Oct. 9	58	33	.00

deal with many veterans yearly and have been through this before and know they cannot honestly tell a veteran they have prior authorization to do a Part B procedure to a Part A patient knowing the home health agency lab department will make great financial gain by allowing the veteran to believe he is getting a service covered by either the V.A. or Medicare when not.

'Building an empire' From Bud Couron Cave Junction

I have been a property owner in Illinois Valley for nearly 40 years, and in all that time we have never had a really serious problem with fires in the valley.

I believe that there is a difference between the duties of our rural fire district in the valley and the duties of the fire departments that manage fires that occur on federal forest land around us. I know that some will remember the 2002 Biscuit Fire, but the sad reality of that was that it could have been prevented had the U.S. Forest Service gone down there and put it out when it first started. As a result it got out of hand and became a major problem.

That fire leapfrogged our fire chief into a large short-term tax levy that he used to build himself a couple of new fire houses that we didn't really need, and now he wants us to give him another levy so he can hire a full-time fire crew we have never needed to man those fire houses. It is my opinion that our fire chief is out to build himself a Castle in the Sky Empire, and if we allow that to happen the taxes involved will not be a two- or three-year levy this time, but a permanent fixture attached to our tax bills that will increase annually as his wants grow.

Think also about what it will cost if the fire levy and the sheriff's levy both pass.

O&C commitment From Josephine Couron Cave Junction

As regards the tax levy for the sheriff's office, I believe that the counties involved in the O&C funds have had and still have a firm commitment with the federal government for those funds.

I also believe that the government cannot just decide one day to stop paying what is owed to the O&C counties without being sued for breach of contract. So why is it that those we have elected to manage our county seem to believe that it is easier to get the money from local taxpayers than to require the government to pay what it owes?

Billions of our tax dollars are being given away to people all over the world, but nothing seems to be available to pay for the O&C contract. If this levy passes it appears that the sheriff will have his own tax fund that neither the county nor the taxpayers will have any control over, and so the vote we had a while back to control the tax gouging by taxing agencies will have been circumvented.

I don't know about other people, but it took us a lot of years to save the money to buy a home, and I resent the attitude that property owners have money that government has a right to spend. I have seen how county government used 40 years of O&C funds, and I have no intention of giving them the first nickel outside the current legal tax requirements.

'Thanks, America' From Wally Aiken Kerby

In 1971, I enlisted in the military out of a very misguided sense of patriotism and duty to country during a time of war. I served my four years of what Herman Wouk termed "polite, penal servitude" and received the Vietnam Service medal and the Vietnam Campaign award with a bronze star.

In return, my country promised that I would be able to access free medical care for the rest of my life; not exactly a fair trade, but when a pig flies you don't complain that it didn't stay aloft for long.

Five years ago, after I got sober, I began receiving my medical care through the V.A. in White City. This care included paroxetine HCL and Trazodone. With the help of these medications I was able to maintain a certain small amount of stability in my life. Previously I used the

(Continued on page 3)

Re-Elect our Mayor Write In

TONY PAULSON

For Mayor

Paid for by the Committee to Elect Tony Paulson

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