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Gun issues hot topic at Birch meet

By SCOTT JORGENSEN
IVN Staff Writer

Several 2nd Amendment issues were the main topics of conversation during a Tuesday, Jan. 13 meeting of the Josephine County Chapter of the John Birch Society at the Redwood Grange Hall in Grants Pass.

The evening's featured guests were Jackson County Sheriff Mike Winters and Josephine County Sheriff Gil Gilbertson, who spoke before a crowd of approximately 60 people.

Winters began by discussing an incident involving South Medford High School teacher Shirley Katz. She made national news when she approached her administration requesting permission to carry a concealed weapon on the premises.

That prompted the *Medford Mail Tribune* newspaper to request a copy of Katz' weapon license from Winters, along with those of all other concealed weapon permit holders in Jackson County. Winters refused, which led to a court battle.

The judge who heard the case was a former attorney for the American Civil Liberties Union, Winters said, and ruled in favor of the paper.

"He had a different view than we did," Winters said.

Winters said the case is currently in the Court of Appeals, and that he has been advised by counsel to drop it. He estimated that it would cost \$40,000 to take the case to the next level.

"There's a good chance we might lose that," Winters said. However, Winters said that he may try alternate routes to resolve the issue.

"We're gonna' try to get this thing fixed legislatively," he said.

The discussion evolved into a question-and-answer session. Audience members asked Winters and Gilbertson about guns being taken away from citizens during the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans in August 2005. Gilbertson responded that he had been there as a member of a Special Weapons and Tactics team used to secure hospitals.

Gilbertson said that some citizens were taking advantage of the chaos that resulted from local police leaving.

"They were taking shots at us," Gilbertson said. "It was truly a zoo down there."

Petitions were circulated throughout the audience ex-

Burglars heist at least \$7,000 from JJ

By MICHELLE BINKER
Staff Writer

Calculating thieves even disabled security cameras and made off with an estimated \$7,000 to \$10,000 cash from the Junction Inn Wednesday morning, Jan. 14.

The pre-dawn burglary, it is thought, was conducted by someone with inside knowledge of day-to-day operations at the landmark motel and restaurant at the intersection of Redwood and Caves highways in Cave Junction.

Manager Edgar San Pascual stated that the thief or thieves took "absolutely everything."

"I don't know the exact amount," he said. "Perhaps \$7,000 to \$10,000. They took everything. All the papers and receipts for the sales in the bar and the restaurant and the till. They got the lottery receipts."

San Pascual said that after he'd prepared a deposit and the tills for the restaurant and lounge, he left the office around 6 a.m. to attend a seminar in Canyonville.

The burglar pried open a door at the rear of the office, then ransacked an inner office, removing a box with paperwork and all the cash — including all but a few

dropped coins.

The incident, which occurred between 6:30 and 7:30 a.m., was witnessed by an employee who, through the office window, briefly sighted a man crouched behind the front counter. The suspect left after she ran to get help. The incident was reported to Josephine County Sheriff's Office (JCSO) by owner Linda Quall around 9 a.m.

"(The thieves) knew exactly what do," San Pascual noted. Even the security cameras were disabled. He believes that there likely was more than one culprit.

"In my experience with this kind of stuff, they don't work by themselves," San Pascual noted.

The business was slightly hobbled Wednesday. With no cash on hand to pay out for the state lottery, the lounge could not open, and the motel office was in disarray awaiting an investigation.

Cave Junction city deputy George Gasperson arrived at around 2 p.m. He recovered fingerprints from empty tills and collected a pipe and golf club apparently used in the break in.

San Pascual expressed relief that no one was hurt in the burglary.

"That's part of business also," he said. "You could be attacked, but what I'm more concerned about is the safety of the people. The money can be earned in other ways, but lives are important."



Fingerprints were taken from rifled money tills by Cave Junction city Deputy George Gasperson (left) after burglars ransacked an office (above). (Photos by Michelle Binker, IVN)

Needs reviewed to reopen Cave Junction Library

By SCOTT JORGENSEN
IVN Staff Writer

The Cave Junction branch of the Josephine County Library was alive with activity on the afternoon of Tuesday, Jan. 13 for the first time since closing on May 17, 2007.

Josephine Community Libraries Inc. (JCLI) Librarian Russell Long toured the facility with JCLI Board of Directors member Doug Walker, volunteer Rick Alves, Illinois Valley resident Linda Naydol and Williams resident Bonnie Johnson.

The group had spent the

morning visiting the Williams branch, and was doing so as part of an effort to assess what would be required to reopen both buildings.

Walker said that the Williams branch is in "fairly decent shape, as far as the building goes." Since the actual facility is smaller, it is easier to maintain and cheaper to heat, Walker said. However, it has no restroom, and patrons have traditionally had to use the one next door at Williams Elementary School. Walker said that may present a problem.

"It's tough to have some-

one in there for six hours without a bathroom," Walker said.

The Wolf Creek branch is open for three hours per week as a reading room in order to fulfill a grant requirement.

In order to open the Cave Junction branch, Walker said JCLI would have to maintain a two-line telephone and have a dedicated staff member and an annual budget of at least \$40,000. The typical heavy usage at the branch makes it more difficult to staff with only volunteers, and would require more hours of opera-

tion, Walker said.

"It would be 15 or 20 hours, whatever we could do," Walker said. "This one is the most expensive, so we'll have to make a bigger commitment."

As part of Tuesday's tour, the group was estimating how many computers JCLI would have to purchase to operate the county's remaining branches. The Grants Pass branch has a surplus of furniture, Walker said, some of which could be brought to Cave Junction.

Walker said that the JCLI

OSP Central Point first to resume 24/7 patrols

Following up on a commitment to put state troopers back on 24/7 patrol, Gov. Kulongoski joined Oregon State Police Superintendent Timothy McLain in announcing that the Central Point Area Command office is the first OSP office to get troopers back onto area roads around-the-clock.

On Dec. 28, 2008, OSP staffing increases, boosted by newly hired and trained recruit troopers, reached a minimum level at the Central Point Area Command office to put troopers on the road around-the-clock on Interstate 5 and secondary roads in Jackson County. Lt. Brian Powers, OSP area commander, stressed that the office is at a minimal staffing level that can place at least two troopers on duty per shift.

"Since July 2007 nearly 5,000 applications were received as we aggressively recruited men and women for future careers with our department," said McLain. "During that time we have been able to fill vacant positions, and recent authorized new positions, by hiring and retaining over 120 recruit troopers."

"Through the support of Gov. Kulongoski and legisla-



OSP photo

tive leadership during the 2007 session, putting troopers on our major freeways and state highways around-the-clock is now becoming a reality. This is the first step as we get closer at some of our other OSP offices in key locations to be out there to help day and night."

McLain swore in 17 new recruit troopers Jan. 4 starting their training program before they report to one of 14 OSP offices. Upon graduation, one of these new recruit troopers will help further boost the Central Point Area Command office staffing. McLain also emphasized that 50 new recruit troopers completed their

academy and field training and were on the road by Jan. 1 patrolling highways around the state.

As of Jan. 1, 2009, the OSP Central Point Area Command office now has 22 sworn state troopers assigned to patrol approximately 260 highway miles in Jackson County. Prior to July 2007, the office had 10 patrol troopers. Besides the patrol troopers, the office has nine detectives and four fish and wildlife troopers.

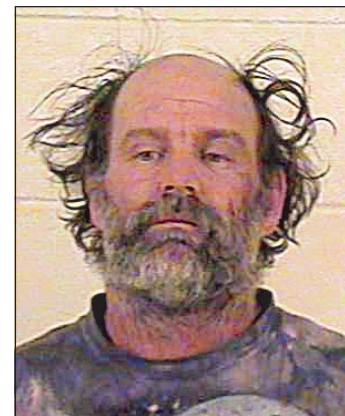
"Our detectives and fish & wildlife troopers don't hesitate to help out on the road when needed," said Powers.

The lieutenant also oversees OSP operations at the Grants Pass work site, providing public safety services and assistance in Josephine County. The nine patrol troopers and two fish & wildlife troopers help patrol approximately 130 miles of highway and freeway 22 hours each day.

Recent cutbacks to the Josephine County Sheriff's Office have placed OSP as the primary responder for emergency calls in the county during day shift hours. Prior to July 2007, this work site had eight patrol troopers.

Staffing increases helped troopers increase patrol-related contacts last year. During 2008, more than 237,000 traffic contacts were reported, a 10 percent increase from 2007. OSP DUII arrests also jumped from 4,211 ('07) to 4,478 ('08).

Information about continuing OSP recruiting efforts is available at www.OSPTrooper.com where prospective applicants also can find an online application.



Gerald Batty (JCSO photo)

Shots fired in O'Brien arrest of wanted man

Chemical munitions were used to aid the early morning arrest of an O'Brien resident on Lone Mountain Road who fired gunshots at an Oregon State Police SWAT team.

Arrested after a brief stand-off on Friday, Jan. 16 at approximately 5:30 a.m. was a wanted felon identified as Gerald Bart Batty, 39, said OSP Lt. Darin Lux.

Subsequently, officers found "a large amount of cash" in the house, as well as illegal drugs and firearms. Batty was lodged in Josephine County Jail in Grants Pass on the following charges:

A warrant charging unlawful possession of a controlled substance/

(Continued on page 2)

Charges filed in fraud case; FAC possibly victimized

By MICHELLE BINKER
Staff Writer

Criminal charges have been filed against an O'Brien resident who is alleged to have stolen a check from her landlord's residence and then signed and cashed it for \$5,000.



Robin Wilson (JCSO photo)

Robin Wilson, 49, was lodged in Josephine County Jail on Jan. 9 on charges of first-degree forgery and first-degree theft. Additionally, Wilson faces charges of DUII and second-degree criminal mischief.

Wilson also is considered a person of interest in an investigation begun in late November 2008 after it was reported that an employee had been taking money from the Forestry Action Committee (FAC) "for personal use." FAC has since disclosed the loss of more than \$24,000 in unauthorized ATM withdrawals.

In addition, the organization has unveiled a pattern of mismanagement and neglect, including failure to pay \$13,177.62 employment payroll taxes and which resulted in a loss of Oregon corporate standing for the FAC. During a meeting of the board of directors Thursday, Dec. 4, it was reported that the organization is looking into suspicious checks, as well as unauthorized ATM withdrawals.

"It's obvious that taxes were not paid," the report

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