

Alliance gains ground with fund-raisers

By Darcy Wallace
IVN Staff Writer

The Illinois Valley Safe House Alliance hosted its yard sale fund-raiser and community garden open house Friday, June 3 behind the Safe House building in Cave Junction.

Two weeks later, interest has grown for renting one of the 24 garden plots, with spots already beginning to fill up for the summer.

Alliance executive director Chris Mallette estimated some \$350 was raised from the yard sale alone. While she didn't have an exact total on the number of people planning to join the garden, she said at least 30 people came by to eat ice cream and learn more about the garden June 3.

"We did the best we've ever done on the garage sale," Mallette said. "We had a steady stream of people. Some people were still trying to buy [items] as we were packing it up."

According to Mallette, items that didn't get sold June 3 were donated to Lifelines food bank and thrift store in C.J.

Preparation for the community garden started in early May, where volunteers held a work party to clean up the area and get it ready

for planting. At approximately 120 square feet in size, the plots can be rented for a suggested \$40-per-year donation and \$20 refundable clean up deposit, according to Alliance volunteer coordinator Marcy Sowa.

With help from many individuals, businesses and organizations, just a few of whom are Harmony Gardens, Suri Futures, Ewing irrigation and the Spiral Living Center, the garden came to life outside behind the Safe House building.

"I believe we're the first [community garden] in the Valley," Mallette said. "It's amazing. [There] would not be a garden if the community had not rallied so strongly to get it done. I'm hoping all of these plots are going to be full."

Recently, Mallette said Alliance received grant funding that would allow them to increase security at the front door and stay open seven days a week. This brings the organization closer to its goal of staying open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, Mallette said.

"I'm hoping...more people will be aware we're here and of the services we provide, and when family and friends are in trouble we'll be the first place they think of," Mallette said.

Bible Church honors graduates

By Darcy Wallace
IVN Staff Writer

As the Illinois Valley High School Class of 2011 advances to the next stage of life, the Community Bible Church in Cave Junction honored four of its own who received scholarships Sunday, June 5, in its annual Baccalaureate Ceremony.

Mark Delgado, Alex Hess, Cindy Moore and Grants Pass High School student Andrea Bowden earned \$800 scholarships for academic achievement and their outstanding character according to pastor Dan Robinson.

"The awards [recognize] outstanding

Christian character in the community, church and school," Robinson said. "We're delighted for sure. They're all our kids. It is a recognition of 12 years of work."

Robinson said though Bowden is not an Illinois Valley student, she has family in the area and has been involved in the community.

Church Clerk Marilyn Arnold said the Baccalaureate Ceremony is put together yearly by the Illinois Valley Ministerial Fellowship (IVMS). It honors public, private and home-schooled students who are members of the seven IVMS churches.



(Photo by Darcy Wallace, Illinois Valley News)

Tarry Frank speaks to the Cave Junction City Council Monday June 13.

Smokejumpers land at I.V. airport

By Darcy Wallace
IVN Staff Writer

When a fire breaks out in remote, mountainous wilderness, some of the first to respond have historically been the firefighters who parachute in from above, smokejumpers, hoping to stop the flames before they become a major blaze.

One of the first-ever smokejumper bases was established in 1943 at the Illinois Valley Airport, remaining in action until 1981. Though no longer in operation, the mess hall, loft and other smokejumper base buildings still remain in their original locations.

Smokejumpers from all over the West Coast and the United States reunited Friday, June 10, through Sunday, June 12, for the 5th Smokejumper Reunion at the I.V. Airport.

After the weekend reunion, the Smokejumper Museum Project Week followed starting Monday, June 13, as part of efforts to clean the parachute loft and prepare the museum for development.

Generations of smokejumpers, at least 100 in number, gathered on the lawn outside the mess hall Saturday for a group photo, dinner and to tell tales from their smokejumping days — some true, others a little more far-fetched.

Chuck Sheley, a Chico, Calif. resident who jumped at the I.V. base from 1959 to 1966, called the I.V. base one of the most unique in U.S. history. Besides the natural surroundings and proximity to the Oregon-California border, the base was one of the first four in the country.

Sheley is a National Smokejumpers Association board member and magazine editor who has written several published works on all aspects of smokejumping.

"The majority of us are from all over," Sheley said. "I thought [this reunion] would be the last. But with this turnout, it's definitely happening again."

Sheley said the prevalence of smokejumper bases in past decades may have significantly reduced the number of forest fires in the area, due to smokejumpers' ability to arrive on site quickly before a fire could escalate.

Bases still operate in Redding, Calif., Redmond, Ore. and Winthrop, Wash., but the memories of the I.V. base hold strong for the many past jumpers present at the reunion.

One such jumper, Illinois Valley resident Gary Buck, said the smokejumpers are especially united from

their experiences training, working in dangerous situations and relying on each other.

"It's like an extended family," Buck said. "We're such old friends; there's a camaraderie, a brotherhood about the base. We were dependent on each other, which makes for a very good friendship."

According to Buck, the varied guests also brought color to the reunion, each former smokejumper with his own background. The oldest smokejumper at the reunion, Buck said, was 88-year-old Richard Carson, who served in the Marine Corps and also worked as a lawyer and a district court judge for 25 years. Others have been surgeons, Catholic priests, even astronauts, Buck said.

After a weekend of golf, skeet shooting, dinner, campfires and storytelling, smokejumpers began to depart Sunday, with others staying behind for project week.

A large list of businesses and organizations, including a few from Grants Pass and Medford, donated cash and materials to the 2011 museum restoration project, planned for the week of Monday, June 13, to Friday, June 17.

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(Photo by Darcy Wallace, Illinois Valley News)

Moon Trees are a part of the display at the Siskiyou Smokejumpers Museum

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