

Added community benefits from neighborhood watches

By
Annette McGee Rasch
IVN Contributing Writer

The neighborhood watch movement in the Illinois Valley continues to grow and organizers say the effort, while initiated to prevent crime, has the added benefit of creating emergency preparedness, infrastructure and uniting

neighborhoods in response to issues, proposals or activities that affect everyone. The Illinois Valley Community Development Organization has asked neighborhood watch coordinators to patrol Forks State Park when they're out on their rounds. The State Parks Board is considering closing the park. Currently there's a one-year

administrative extension that runs out in September and demonstrating a collaborative community effort to prevent criminal activity in the park may aid the cause to keep it open. Citizens Against Crime, the O'Brien based neighborhood watch group, is also patrolling the Illinois Valley Airport.

Plans are underway to create maps with overlays that denote all the watches and patrols in the Valley, to increase communications and reporting capabilities and to help track the movements and activities of local criminals. "Neighborhood watches help link everyone together. Sharing information is the key," said Josephine County Sheriff Gil Gilbertson. "Whether it's a natural disaster, or the government shuts down, or the economy goes upside down ... by organizing these

watches, people can also keep track of skills and resources. Like who has certain tools, or where a doctor lives." Improved communications among neighbors also means that everyone finds out about land use activities proposed near their properties. Many neighbors involved with the Ken Rose Lane area neighborhood watches are now concerned about their fire safety if the BLM's East West Junction timber sale goes through. While the majority of the sale is slated to be a thinning project, according to Nina Horsley, a member of the Ken Rose neighborhood watch, the units in her neighborhood would be stripped of 80 percent of the big trees with diameters of 26 to 36 inches in sectional clear-cuts. "What's really amazing is how the BLM admits, and this is documented in their decision report, that this cut would increase fire danger for five to 20 years in the units behind our homes," Horsley said. "As more of our neighbors become aware, most oppose it." "This area already has

a problem with encroaching tanoak, a flammable species. Logging out the big fire-resistant trees and leaving the saplings behind dramatically increases our risk," Horsely said. "Considering predominant wind patterns, a fire here could burn through our homes and head over toward Rockydale." "The project would create easier access on the back side of our properties for criminals to enter our neighborhood," said watch coordinator Guenter Ambron. "As a group, we're not against logging, but we prefer responsible logging practices. Especially close to homes." The latest Illinois Valley neighborhood watch group coming together is in the Dick George Road area. Neighbors are invited to attend an organizing meeting on April 4 from 1 to 4 p.m. at Bridgeview Church on the corner of Holland Loop and Dick George Road. "We need more team captains in the area," said Cathy Slavin, who is coordinating the effort. "We also need more people on Holland Loop to become involved." To get in touch with Slavin regarding

the new watch group call 541-592-2390. Developing these watches is a process and coordinators are cautioned to be on the lookout for those who would take advantage — when people attend meetings that no one knows, or has a questionable criminal past, identification and documentation of residency should be required, according to organizers. Resources for the development of new watches are provided by Sheriff's Volunteer Unit Neighborhood Watch Coordinator Peter Good, who can be reached at the Merlin substation on Thursdays, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at 541.474.5135. Coordinators are also invited to call Sheriff Gilbertson at 541-474-5117. On the first Monday of every month, neighborhood watch captains and coordinators throughout the valley meet at Wild River Brewing and Pizza Company at 4 p.m. The meeting is open to those interested in forming new or maintaining existing watches and patrols. Contact Guenter Ambron for more information at 541-592-4124.



(Photo by Dan Mancuso, Illinois Valley News)

Guenter Ambron speaks to the crowd of 30 at the Neighborhood Watch Town Hall in CJ, March 21.

Reunion organizer has deep valley roots

By
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Illinois Valley High School reunion organizer Chris Leppert, nee Duncan, who has 37 relatives buried in the Laurel Cemetery, has a rich ancestral history that echoes life experiences shared by many generations of Illinois Valley residents. When Josephine County was established in 1856 during the heyday of gold mining, the Illinois Valley was at the heart of the action. The first county seat was located at "Sailor Diggings" (eventually renamed Waldo). Then in an 1857 election, Kerbyville won the distinction by beating out Grants Pass and served as county seat until 1886, when Grants Pass finally prevailed. Leppert's maternal grandmother, Vivian Grimmett, nee McVay, was born in 1893, in Eureka, Calif., before the family made their way to Southern Oregon. And Leppert's paternal grandmother, Dollie Payne, was born in Jacksonville in 1873. Payne married George S. Duncan, a stage coach driver from Kerbyville (present day Kerby). The stagecoach route that linked Grants Pass to Crescent City made several stops in the Valley that included William Naucke's General Store in Kerbyville and the George house (where the golf course is located today), according to Kerbyville Museum Director Dennis Strayer. Driving on to Cemetery Road (now

Laurel Road); the stagecoaches then stopped at Holland General Store; before rambling into the old mining town of Waldo. Finally, heading toward the coast, stagecoaches first made a pit stop at Baines Station in O'Brien, where a stone corral held fresh horses for the teams about to trek up Lone Mountain Road. "The stagecoaches ran from the 1860s until the early 1900s, when cars and trucks replaced horses," Strayer said. "Back then, the trip took a few days. They were dealing with rough dirt roads and rain always made the journey more difficult. To the south, deep snow would shut the operation down in the winter." People accepted the hazards of stagecoach journeys as a necessary part of life. More than a few of these trips were harrowing, due to rough terrain, weather, or the occasional highway robber. Duncan was eventually killed in a stagecoach accident in the line of duty. Duncan and Dollie's only child (Leppert's father) was George Alton Duncan. Leppert's mother, Elenora Grimmett, born in Grants Pass in 1917, later married Alton Duncan. The widow Dollie Duncan was a strong woman who ran a magazine and newspaper shop across from the Stony Front Tavern (originally known as the Ritz Tavern) and became the first telephone operator in Kerby. "My grandmother took that responsibility seriously," Leppert said. "The switchboard was set up in her living room. It had 40 to 60 connections. I think it's at the museum now." The Kerbyville Museum also

has a few pictures of Duncan's small house. Leppert, born in 1936 and raised in the Valley during the World War II years, remembers how her grandmother rose to the demands of her community role with a lot of class. "When she'd get a telegram from the War Department, notifying that someone was injured, killed or missing in action, she would call Anna Wittrock, who lived nearby and had a car," Leppert said. "Instead of using the phone, Anna would pick her up and they'd go deliver the hard news personally." During the war, one Sunday a month, Dollie (Duncan) also served as a civilian Aircraft Warning Observer. Equipped with binoculars and a small field phone in a leather pouch, she headed up Caves Highway to various look-out points, according to Strayer. "These volunteers were given a deck of playing cards that had pictures of friendly and enemy aircraft printed on the other side,"

Strayer said. To make reports, observers connected their field phone to telephone lines installed by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in the 1930s. "This was important, because phones were so far apart back then." Strayer explained how the CCC completed the telephone line project to facilitate better fire-fighting communications, but said their work became important to the war effort. Leppert's mother and stepfather, Jim Whitehead, owned the "Hoot Owl" in the 1940s, which is now known as the Sportsman's Tavern in Cave Junction. "We lived across the street, above the old Trehearne's Clothing

store. When I was little, my mother let me sit in the window and watch the drunks get tossed out of the tavern for fighting. And they usually kept fighting outside." Laughing, Leppert added, "Some things don't change." After high school, Leppert left the I.V. to find work and attend college. She eventually became a legal secretary and settled in San Diego where she married John Leppert in 1968. "This beautiful valley is my second home. I'll always enjoy traveling back up here. I treasure my time with the many dear friends with whom I share so much common history," Leppert said.



(Photo by Dan Mancuso, Illinois Valley News)

Chris Leppert gets a happy greeting from IVHS Alumni, Rocky Jones at the I.V. News office March 20.

Softball and baseball teams suffer losses

By
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The Illinois Valley baseball team took a tough loss at North Valley on Tuesday, March 19, against the Knights, a team currently sitting on a 3-3 record. The Cougars moved to 2-2 on

the season following the loss. In softball, the Lady Cougars have undergone another string of losses against a few formidable teams putting their record at 0-6. On Thursday, March 21, the Lady Cougars played and lost against Chiloquin, a 2A school with a 1-5 record, at home. The final score of the game was 15-8.

Then on Saturday, March 23, the girls competed against Glendale and North Valley at North Valley in a doubleheader wherein they lost both games, 10-0 against Glendale and 16-1 against North Valley. The Lady Cougars are scheduled to play Bandon / Pacific, a 3A school with a 1-3 record, on Saturday, March 30, in another doubleheader at home in the valley.

Arts Red Garter Where the Valley comes to play Karaoke - Dancing Live Music	Jay Barley And Friends Americana Friday, March 29, @ 5:30 p.m. Taylor's Country Store	Wild River HANDCRAFTED FOOD & ALE Saturday, March 30, 6 p.m. Tim Mitchell Every Wed Open Mic Night From 6-8 p.m. with Jim Nolan	Pool Tourney Every Saturday Cash Prizes Sportsman Tavern	Kate's Redwood Bar and Grill Winter hours Tuesday to Saturday Noon to 8 p.m. Stop in and see Mamie and Kate Today!	Silas Wolf March 29 @ McGrew's of Course!
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