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Walker faces recall

By Dan Mancuso
IVN Staff

Josephine County Commissioner Cheryl Walker has a battle to fight in November.

A recall petition against Walker was filed June 13 in the Josephine County Clerk's office. William Hunker, the chief recall petitioner, along with Joseph Rice of the local Oath Keepers group, carried the petition to the clerk's office.

The Oath Keepers recently caught the ire of Walker when she abruptly ended a weekly business session due in part to the Oath Keepers standing during the meeting.

According to Josephine County Clerk Art Harvey, Hunker's recall petition came with 4,994 legal signatures, enough to put the petition to voters. Harvey said the petitioners eventually expect to turn in over 6,000 signatures to cover any possible invalid or duplicate signatures.

Harvey went on to explain that once the signatures are submitted, his office has ten days to verify them. Once the signatures are verified, Walker will have five days to resign or file a statement of justification for retaining her seat.

See Recall on A-7



(Photo by Dale Sandberg, IVFD Media Dept)

Oregon State Police responded June 11 to a two-vehicle traffic crash in the 1500 block of Lake Shore Drive. One was transported by ground ambulance to Three Rivers Community Hospital in Grants Pass with minor injuries. The second driver was extricated by Illinois Valley Fire District firefighters and transported by Mercy Flights air ambulance to Asante Rogue Regional Medical Center in Medford with serious injuries.

Head on collision does not stop Hathkapasuta

By Judy Hoyle
IVN Contributing Writer

In the midst of final preparations for Hathkapasuta last week, Suzanne Vautier suffered a head-on car crash Wednesday, June 11. The collision in the 1500 block of Lakeshore Drive, east of Selma took place around 7 p.m.

"I'm lucky to be alive," Vautier marveled this weekend as she helped run the river celebration on Saturday, June 14. She had been bruised by the steering wheel and airbag, but otherwise cleared for discharge from Three Rivers Community Hospital (TRCH) in Grants Pass early Thursday morning.

As she moved around Forks State Park on Saturday, Vautier walked with a slight limp. Her chest, mouth and nose were sore from the impact, but she was very grateful for the technology that saved both drivers from certain death. Both vehicles were totaled. "If you saw my truck, you wouldn't believe I walked away," Vautier smiled.

Hathkapasuta was a collaborative effort between the

Cultural & Ecological Enhancement Network (CEEN) of which Vautier is executive director, and the Illinois Valley Community Development Organization (IVCDO). The two organizations teamed to successfully bring the event off without a hitch, assisted by the Illinois River Valley Arts Council (IRVAC), one of the original sponsors of the celebration during its 6-year run a decade ago. Over 20 other non-profits and businesses helped co-sponsor the Saturday event.

Vautier's account of the Wednesday accident, detailed that she was alone, driving east in a 2005 Dodge pickup on the two lane road. As she approached a bend in the road, a westbound red passenger car driven by Ashley Acremant came around the curve, and drove straight into her lane. The driver of a second vehicle following Acremant called 911 and later told Vautier that the sun was blinding, as he too, came around the curve heading west.

Vautier, age 54, believes Acremant was driving too fast for conditions. Vautier was able to get out of her disabled pickup, but Illinois Valley Fire District emergency personnel had to cut the top off Acremant's vehicle in order to extricate the 22 year

old. Acremant was then transported by Mercy Flights to Rogue Regional Medical Center in Medford with serious injuries including a broken arm and concussion. Vautier was transported to TRCH via ground ambulance.

Vautier also expressed gratitude on Saturday that the demands of the festivities distracted her from her physical pains as she worked with co-organizers Tim Leyba, a CEEN board member, and Kenny Houck, business development coordinator for the IVCDO's Business Entrepreneurial Center. Preparation stretched back to a weed-pull that the three lead at the park on April 19.

Around 500 individuals participated in the one-day celebration, which offered kids activities by IRVAC and others; and information and vendor booths. The live music line-up included Grant Nelson and bands ranging from Lonesome Road's bluegrass Americana to Only Natural's hip-hop. Afternoon performances included belly dancing by the Lotus Blossom Tribal Troupe, Daybreak's eclectic rock and Alcyon Massive's hip-hop and reggae finale.

See Hathkapasuta on A-7

Scabies and lice bring attention to homeless people at Jubilee Park

By Annette McGee Rasch
IVN Senior Contributing Writer

"We were called in and gave medical transport to two bug-infested homeless people," said Illinois Valley Fire District Chief Hoke. "One of these gentlemen at the park needed help for the same problem two days later. We need more help. Some of these people have serious health problems. One local person wanted us to hose them all down."

When summer arrives, park-use rises and the perennial conflict erupts between the public and the transient population that also hang out there.

"Oftentimes a single incident shines an all-too-brief light on serious homelessness issues that lurk in the background," said Jessica Swartz, Josephine County Emergency Services Manager. "Homeless people with scabies and lice at Jubilee Park are symptoms of much bigger social issues. And it's complex, with potential conflicts between community impacts and long-term health effects to the homeless people themselves. The bottom line is that we need to do more than put a band aid on this gaping wound."

Swartz wants park users to know that unless they have skin-to-skin contact with someone infected, or share clothing or bedding, they won't contract the bugs. Lice can stay in the area, but not for very

long, she added.

"We need to deal with the infestation by providing hygiene and medical care for the people infected," Swartz said. "Other homeless people in the area are probably also infected."

Pastor Chase from Cave Junction's Methodist church is heading up the Illinois Valley Homeless Taskforce which is working to provide showers, medical treatment and laundry services for the homeless. Chase and Swartz are networking with numerous local, county and state partners, including the City of Cave Junction, the Siskiyou Community Health Center and United Community Action Network (UCAN).

Chase's group also provides hot meals and a warming shelter in winter, when temperatures drop under forty degrees.

"It's a great group of volunteers who help out with this effort," said Cave Junction Councilman John Gardiner, who also pitches in. "We're re-grouping right now to discern how to best move forward. It's a huge issue that splits the community. Some feel that the homeless need and deserve help, but many others don't."

"Homeless people exist in all communities and they represent different things to different people," said UCAN Chief Operating Officer Kelly Wessels, who heads the Josephine County Homelessness Taskforce. "Many just want the problem to go away. Some believe the homeless are just a bunch of drunks who

get what they deserve after having made a lot of bad choices; while others feel compassion for the predicaments homeless individuals find themselves in."

Wessels said demographics are changing among homeless populations, with increasing numbers of people existing just a few paychecks away from homelessness, and without family or close friends, living in a car or on the streets is too often the end result. She also said more teenagers and single parents with children are losing their homes, and, that many of Cave Junction's homeless population are veterans.

"Not dealing with these issues is also a serious economic problem," Wessels said. "Businesses are hurt when homeless people hang out nearby discouraging patrons. It costs communities more if they don't deal with homelessness. The root causes, the poverty and lack of social services and law enforcement must be addressed."

"Without an adequate police presence, especially at night, there's little to prevent these folks from camping at the park," said Cave Junction Mayor Carl Jacobsen. "Though in the past few weeks, our new contract deputy Travis Snyder has been pouring out alcohol and writing citations to anyone violating the park's rules and regulations."

See Homeless on A-7

National Pollinator Week is June 16 – 22.

One of every three bites of our food is dependent on pollinators and about 75% of flowering plants rely on pollinators like bees, butterflies and hummingbirds. But sadly, pollinators are on the decline worldwide.

There's no better time to reward these hard workers for all they do than by turning your yard or garden into a welcoming haven for wildlife. Here are a few tips to attract these helpful friends to your garden:

Honeybees pollinate about one-third of all crops in the United States. Honeybees and smaller native bees have somewhat shorter tongues than bumblebees, so they'll appreciate tightly packed clusters of tiny flowers and shallow blossoms like some milkweeds, spirea, goldenrod and phlox.

Bats are hard at work while you're asleep, so consider night-blooming plants in addition to day-bloomers. Install a bat box on a nearby tree to encourage bats to take up residence in your yard.

Hummingbirds love brightly colored, tubular flowers. Native red trumpet honeysuckle and many types of columbine are a favorite. When blooms are few, supplement flowers with feeders filled with nectar water.

Butterflies move pollen on their bodies, like bees, but aren't quite as efficient as other pollinators. Attract these beauties with red, yellow, orange, pink and purple blossoms that are flat-topped or clustered and have short flower tubes.



Two Rusk Ranch Monarchs