

Illinois Valley News

Wednesday, January 25, 2017, 1 Section, Volume LXXIX No. 45

Published weekly for the residents of the Illinois Valley

Burglar takes checks, cash and 1 toy; leaves books

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Sometime in the evening of Jan. 14 the Cave Junction Library was broken into through a window long thought to be screwed shut in the aging building. Although there's an alarm that has a battery backup and connects to a satellite for instant communication with authorities, the burglar made off with a box of blank checks, the keys to every lock in the building, a handful of donation checks from individuals amounting to \$270, a \$50 toy from the children's program, and of course—this burglar not being one to leave any details out—a small pile of change in branch manager Roberta Lee's desk. There are no suspects at this time.

"They got as far as rifling through my desk then the alarm sounded which is loud and obnoxious," Lee stated, thankful that the burglary was short-lived. The burglar, having not stolen any books for their later education or amusement, must have decided that they could come back later and simply rent them out if they were feeling inclined. Lee also mentioned that the burglar was kind enough to close the window on their way out.

Lee, because the keys had been stolen, was forced to replace all the locks on the building and of course quickly closed the account to which the blank checks were tied. In total it was \$210 for the locks to be replaced and another \$35 for a box of checks and new account. On a side note the burglar also managed to pull the key rack off the wall as he took the keys.

"The big one was that we lost donations which was a drag ... One of my amazing friends went through town and let all the store fronts know not to cash a three party check." Fortunately, Lee was able to contact their donors immediately and together they were able to cancel all the checks without any of them being used for ill-gotten gains.

"It makes it so much easier to come back to work after something like this happens because you feel disheartened but know that you're not the only one. The neighborhood is here and we're all feeling it together," Lee remarked, trying to look on the bright side of things before continuing on to some of the other problems facing their establishment.

"There's lots of places outside the building that are covered from the weather so we get people who are trying to find some place that's got a little shelter. Not all those people are respectful about the fact that you don't leave your trash behind or that you don't go to the bathroom out there." Lee went on to conclude that the majority of people seeking shelter are well mannered and respectful but that it only takes a few to cause serious issues. Ending her point on the topic of nuisance crimes she said that her building generally gets tagged with spray paint more often as weather becomes favorable.

After a continuous bout of vandalism the library decided to shut down their Wi-Fi service that was available to the public 24/7 without a password. According to Lee the Wi-Fi is now only available when the library is open for its few hours every week. To be sure, this is a great loss to the community but for Lee the benefits outweighed the burden.

"I spent more time and more money cleaning up the vandalism than anything else that I was currently working on."

Washout!



(Photo by Dan Mancuso, Illinois Valley News)

Three Mill Rd. bridge in Selma Friday, Jan. 20. According to the Illinois Valley Fire District (IVFD), residents in the affected area are urged to use extreme caution as IVFD cannot provide fire protection beyond the bridge.

Commissioners meet with residents

Caroline Griffith
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Newly elected Josephine County Commissioners Lily Morgan and Dan DeYoung hosted a town hall meeting at the Cave Junction County Building, Monday, Jan. 23 to introduce themselves to constituents and answer questions. Commissioner Simon Hare was unable to attend.

The meeting was preceded by a half-hour sit-down with members of the Cave Junction City Council to discuss how the board of county commissioners could better serve the city of Cave Junction. The public was invited to listen to this discussion, but not allowed to comment at that time.

The public meeting began with the commissioners stating their intention to hold more meetings in the Illinois Valley. The new board of commissioners will be holding more meetings in general than the previous board. According to Morgan, they plan to increase their weekly meetings from three to six. "We are going to do business in public more frequently," she added.

Before taking any questions from the public, Morgan and DeYoung asked attendees to stay away from the subject of proposed changes to the Rural Land Development Code in regards to cannabis cultivation. The board of commissioners is considering amending the code to address the growing of cannabis on residentially zoned properties. There is a public hearing on the subject planned for 9 a.m. Monday, Jan. 30 at Anne Basker

Auditorium in Grants Pass. According to Morgan, it would be a violation of state public meeting laws for the commissioners to take comments on the issue before the public hearing. "We understand there are a lot of concerns," Morgan said. "We do want your feedback. We do want to hear you, but it has to wait until next Monday. We want to make sure we are following the law and that we are following due process." She added that those who wish to comment, but are unable to attend the meeting, should email their comments to bcc@co.josephine.or.us. Emails that are received will be logged as public comments.

Comments from attendees centered mainly on the county's response to the recent snowstorms and how to fund law enforcement. In response to a question about where the county is now in terms of providing law enforcement, DeYoung responded, "We've got a lot of work to do, as a community and as a county." He referenced a recent meeting with representatives from Senators Jeff Merkley and Ron Wyden's offices who indicated that the county should not expect to receive any funding from the Secure Rural Schools Act. "Basically, we are on our own," he said.

In response to public safety funding questions, Morgan brought up three potential avenues to generate revenue. One is a bill before the state Legislature to turn some state lands over to counties who can then extract resources to raise revenue. Another idea is to lease jail space to the state

prison system, which is overcrowded and looking for alternatives to building costly new jails. The third idea is to lobby the state to allocate more cannabis sales tax revenue to Josephine and Jackson counties which are home to one-third of the registered cannabis grow-sites in the state of Oregon.

In response to a comment from a local Sheriff's Department volunteer about how severely people are suffering from the level of crime, DeYoung lamented, "The people who said 'no' (to the public safety levy) got what they want. The people that said 'yes,' there is not even anything for them to buy. They wanted to pay for public safety, but there is nothing we can sell them."

The commissioners also acknowledged the need for better communication with the public. "As a county, we don't do a good job of communicating," said Morgan. "We need to do a better job of getting information out." She also encouraged citizens to communicate with the board of county commissioners. "If there is something you want to see the county do, call us and get it on the agenda," she said.

With the exception of holidays, the board of commissioners convenes the first, third and fourth Wednesdays for weekly business sessions at 9 a.m. and the second Wednesday at 5:30 p.m., unless otherwise noted on the agenda, the board meets at Anne Basker Auditorium, 600 NW 6th Street, Grants Pass. The meetings are open and the public is invited to attend.

Conservation District elects new board members

Jason McMillen
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The election results for the Conservation District's new directors are finalized and they are set to be sworn in Jan. 26. The winners and their respective zones are as follows: Zone One - Janet Walker, Zone Four - Katrina Poydack, and the vacant "at large" position was filled by Jim Gurley. The director position for Zone Five remains unfilled at this time but there is still hope for it to be in the future. All mentioned positions are unpaid volunteers.

Walker, a long time environmentalist and current member of the Illinois Valley Watershed Council, sought to become a zone director primarily because she

was worried that nobody else would step up for the job and that it would remain unfilled for an extended amount of time. It was also mentioned that she has many years of experience with this type of work and she was concerned that, on the off chance the position was filled in a timely fashion, the candidate might not be as well equipped to deal with their new responsibilities as her. "I was involved with the Middle Rogue Watershed Council for a number of years," Walker said, substantiating past experience before moving on to her ambitions, "We had plant sales and we put out a little shrub book and they did a little more than the one does here so I enjoyed that and I'm going to try and get the Illinois Valley to do more things like that."

Despite the last minute nature of her application, and the fact that she ran unopposed, Walker received a considerable amount of write-in votes after she frantically turned in the required paperwork. "It was a very last minute decision to do this," Walker stated before explaining herself, "I didn't campaign or anything I just called my friends and said, 'Hey, vote for me!'"

Walker initially became active with watershed council's when she was talked into it by the Sierra Club, a hiking club whose meetings she attended, who thought they should have an environmentally friendly person on the board. "Now days we have a lot more environmentally friendly people and I think we've come a long way," Walker remarked, reflecting about the changes

in society's view of sustainability over many years and as a whole before continuing, "People understand now that it's very important to take care of the land."

In a closing statement Walker said that she's looking forward to serving the community and is highly motivated to keep its water clean and to protect the salmon—some species of which are endangered. "We always have plenty to discuss and vote on but I can vote now," Walker said excitedly before briefly explaining that she could only vote on watershed matters previously. "It's a big zone and I'm excited about being elected to this board ... I could never ever fill Carl Summer's shoes (her predecessor) but I'll try to do my best."