

Josephine County Crime Briefs: by Sam Marsh, KLDR 104.5 FM / KAJO 1270 AM / 99.7 FM

Police say a Grants Pass man was shot in the groin and then arrested early Monday after he entered his ex-girlfriend's residence and threatened her. The Grants Pass Department of Public Safety reported officers responded to 911 call about a disturbance in the 1700 block of Rogue River Highway at 12:55 a.m.. The female caller reported her ex-boyfriend -- 32-year-old Michael Lee Fouch -- entered her residence and had threatened her previously. While the victim was on the phone with 911, a single gunshot was heard by dispatchers. Officers arrived on scene and found Fouch in the driveway with a single gunshot wound to his groin area. They provided first aid until American Medical Response arrived. The suspect's injury was non-life-threatening and he was transported to Three Rivers Medical Center for treatment. An investigation revealed that Fouch had forced entry into a bedroom where the 31-year-old female victim was hiding with her juvenile son.

The Josephine County Sheriff's Office tracked down two fugitives in the Illinois Valley early March 10. The Sheriff's Office reports 29-year-old Andrea Lee McGrath and 44-year-old Antoine Hess -- both of Cave Junction -- were arrested in the 1800-block of Laurel Road Sunday at about 10 a.m.. Deputies said McGrath was wanted on a Josephine County warrant for criminal trespass and two Grants Pass warrants for probation violation on original crimes of theft and methamphetamine possession. In addition, she was wanted for probable cause in a separate case alleging crimes of attempted unauthorized use a motor vehicle, unlawful entry into a motor vehicle and criminal mischief. Hess was wanted by the Grants Pass Department of Public Safety for probable cause in an unrelated case of felon in possession of a weapon.

Sunstone Organics is recalling its kratom products sold in the Rogue Valley and other parts of the nation due to potential contamination with salmonella bacteria. The *Mail Tribune* reports the leaves of the kratom tree -- which are native to SE Asia -- contain mind-altering compounds that can have effects similar to opioids and stimulants. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, kratom is not currently illegal in the United States.

Springfield-based Sunstone Organics is voluntarily recalling two types of kratom: Sunstone Organics White Vein Kratom Lot 119 and Sunstone Organics Maeng Da Kratom Lot 124A. The recall affects all sizes of the products in both capsule and powder form.

The Josephine County Sheriff's Office has apprehended three more fugitives who were wanted for skipping scheduled court dates. According to a press release titled "Warrant Wednesday," deputies recently arrested Michael Cory Pullin, Jeremy Curtis Blondell and Merle Leonard Southard, Sr. Pullin was arrested March 2 on Sunny Valley Loop for failing to appear in court for felon in possession of a firearm. Blondell was arrested March 4 at the Wolf Creek General Store for failing to appear in court for two counts of contempt of court. Southard was arrested March 4 on Caves Highway for Parole Violation stemming from a previous conviction for narcotics possession.

The Josephine County Sheriff's Office captured an Illinois Valley man March 4 who has a bad reputation for running away from law enforcement. The Sheriff's Office reports 39-year-old Merle Leonard Southard, Sr., was in Cave Junction. Deputies spotted Southard and knew he was wanted on a Josephine County felony warrant for parole violation related to a previous conviction for drug possession. He also spotted them and took off running. The foot pursuit started on Old Stage Road. Deputies said Southard ran through a residence and continued outside until they were finally able to detain him on Caves Highway. Charges of escape, interfering with police, criminal mischief and criminal trespass were added to his criminal bill. Southard -- who has been dubbed "Merle The Squirrel" - was transported to Grants Pass and lodged without bail in the Josephine County Jail.

Josephine County Animal Control was investigating a dog fight in which two people were bitten in south Grants Pass. The Grants Pass Department of Public Safety reports officers were dispatched to the reported animal complaint in the 1100 block of Fruitdale Drive March 6. Witnesses reported

that one of the dogs belongs to an apartment dweller at that address. They said the dog was running loose, is always a problem and was the aggressor in the incident. The other dog was on a leash being walked by a person. Officers arrived on scene and determined there were minor injuries to both dogs as well as secondary bites to their owners. No one was seriously hurt, so no medical was needed. The case was turned over to Animal Control for further investigation.

A recently completed inspection gave high marks to the Josephine County Jail and its staff. A grand jury inspection of the Josephine County Adult Correctional Facility took place Feb. 26 when Sheriff Dave Daniel and key members of his jail staff escorted the group through the jail. Based on a consensus of the grand jury, the overall impression was that the facility is clean, safe and adequate at this time for its purpose -- and that it is administered by a dedicated, efficient and highly-professional staff. During the inspection, the grand jury was granted access to all areas of the jail except for the cell blocks where the inmates have freedom of movement. The sheriff and staff members stopped at each area of the facility to explain the purpose and functionality of the areas and to answer questions from the group. One highlight from the inspection was a new camera system that improves picture fidelity and helps to eliminate blind spots throughout the jail.

A Cave Junction man was arrested March 6 for trying to break into and steal an occupied vehicle in south Grants Pass. The Public Safety Department reported 51-year-old David Blade Clay was arrested at Walgreens on Union Avenue shortly after 7 p.m.. About 30 minutes earlier, officers had responded to a reported vehicle break-in in the 500-block of Rogue River Highway. Clay allegedly tried to steal a car while someone was inside. He then fled on foot toward Williams Highway. Officers tracked Clay to Walgreens where he freely admitted to trying to get into the victim's car. The victim was also assisted by the Josephine County Sheriff's Deputies who drove them to Walgreens for positive identification of the suspect. David Clay was booked into the Josephine County Jail on charges of unlawful entry into a motor vehicle and attempted unauthorized use of a motor vehicle.

The Oregon State Police cited a motorist for one violation and warned him for two others during a March 5 morning traffic stop in the Illinois Valley. OSP reported troopers pulled over a Ford Mustang driven by 35-year-old Michael Lee Baty near milepost 35 of Redwood Highway at about 10:50 a.m. yesterday. Troopers said they stopped Baty for speeding and quickly determined he had no driver's license and that the license plates on the car had been switched. The man told troopers he had just purchased the vehicle with the existing plates on it. Baty was cited for no operator's license and warned for speeding and switched plates. The license plate was seized and entered into evidence for destruction.

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