

RACE ...

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Nicole Schlienger, project specialist for Project Youth Plus, told of her diverse background of Chinese and Jewish decent. She told heartfelt truths about “racial slurs and stereotypes.” Schlienger said, “It is hard to be proud when people don’t want you to be who you are.” She described in tears how her mother had to go into hiding during COVID-19 when people referred to the pandemic as the “China Virus.” Her Chinese mother no longer would go for walks in her neighborhood because a nearby household started flying the Confederate Flag and she feared for her safety. One of her harsh realities has been finding living accommodations during the current housing crisis in Josephine County. Schlienger is disabled on a fixed income and that made it even harder when she needed to find low income housing. Shockingly, she told the audience that one of her barriers to housing has been religion. “Religion is a barrier to finding

housing when you are of a minority religion. You are not welcome.”

Vincent Aguilera, who has worked closely with Grants Pass students for the last 28 years, said, “I haven’t seen anything change.” When he worked at a high school doing security, he heard “lots of racial comments” even from staff members. When Hispanic students would bring the complaints to administration, they were not believed over the “Caucasian colleagues.” Vincent also relayed stories of other staff members using racial slurs toward him and described the shame and stress of “swallowing it” in order to keep his job.

So Health-E Director Annie Valtierra-Sanchez concluded that conversations like these are what our communities need. “How do we work together to break the systems that perpetuate racial injustices?” asked Valtierra-Sanchez.

Dillinger said she would like to see more elected officials attend events like these in the future. “Like I always say, learn how to vote and know who you are electing to represent you!”

Annexations and collective bargaining at county weekly meeting

C J Schatza
IVN copy editor

The July 14 business session of the Board of Josephine County Commissioners saw three properties annexed into the Josephine Community Library District by petition of landowner.

Library Director Kate Lasky spoke at the meeting to voice her appreciation for the landowners opting to join the district in order to pay taxes supporting library services. She also explained the process of being annexed into the district.

“As the district was formed in 2017,” Lasky said, “it is noncontiguous with the boundary of Josephine County. Therefore, individual property owners have the opportunity to add their property into the district by choice. So, we’re talking about folks who are volunteering to pay taxes to support the library system, which I think is pretty wonderful. And they also have the opportunity to vote on that elected board.”

Lasky added that a “substantial property,” the Motel Del Rogue east of Grants Pass near the River’s Edge Restaurant, was

one of the three properties petitioning for annexation.

“We’re very appreciative of all three petitioners,” Lasky concluded.

All three commissioners - Chair Dan DeYoung, Vice Chair Herman Baertschiger and Commissioner Darin Fowler - voted to approve the annexations.

Moving on to administrative actions, the board considered the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) collective bargaining agreement.

JoCo Human Resources Director J.J. Scofield approached the podium to give the run-down on the AFSCME, saying, “What you have before you is a three-year contract with AFSCME, which is our largest bargaining unit. They have a little over 200 members within the county. It’s pretty typical to have three years with this particular bargaining unit.”

“The process, just for the public to know, it is an ongoing negotiation between the county and the union. The union initiated their voting to ratify this contract yesterday. The voting will be finalized on Friday, and so now it’s in front of the board for you

all to ratify.”

Getting into specifics, Scofield discussed the cost of living adjustments set forth in the agreement as well as administrative changes.

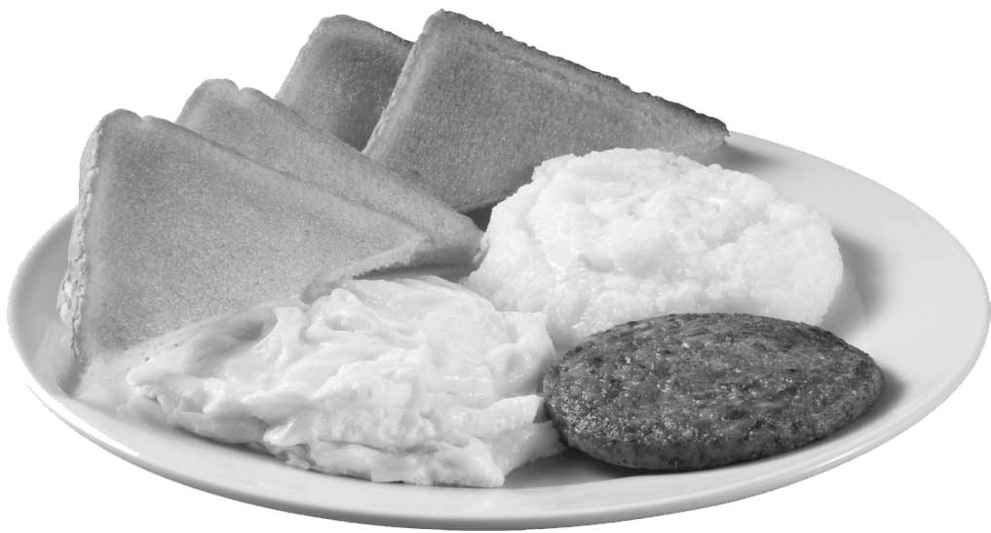
DeYoung pointed out that the agreement will affect around 40% of the county’s workforce.

Under the board’s consent calendar, appointments were made to the JoCo Charter Review Commission. Before the appointments were announced, Fowler noted that three seats on the commission were set aside for Grants Pass residents but there were no applicants, so he asked meeting attendees to spread the word and maybe throw their names in the hat. Jean Ann Miles of the Cave Junction City Council, John Chambers, Andreas Blech, Ken Beatty, Dorothy Better and Michelle Binker were all appointed at the July 14 session.

Reminder: Josephine County no longer posts recordings of board meetings to YouTube. These videos can be accessed by going to the county’s website: <http://www.co.josephine.or.us/Page.asp?NavID=2310>.

IV Grange will be reopening for breakfast

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and continuing
July 29 and August 5
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and awards and pizza party on
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Kids from 5 - 9 years old: 9 am -10:30 am

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We would suggest that they bring a water bottle and a hat!

Cost is \$10 per kid for the entire program including pizza party!