

LIVING LEGACY

-Continued from PAGE ONE



This impressive stand of evergreens stands as a legacy to Smith's care over the decades. -Photo by Andrea Di Salvo

"My son brought it home in sixth grade," he recalls. "He was up at Tupper, and they gave them to them there." His son, who would have been 49, passed away three years ago.

"He (Smith's son) brought it home in that little Styrofoam cup and planted that seedling," recalls Bob Jepsen, who was Heppner mayor during the early years of Smith's planting endeavors. "I'm tickled to death that we can take people up there and show them a tree that was planted as a seedling."

Smith says the oldest tree in the row is the Douglas fir, which he brought down from the mountains and planted some 20 years ago. More prosaically, he purchased the blue spruce locally.

He says he started the project because the patch of ground owned by the city didn't look good.

"It was a mess over there," says Smith. "It was a weed patch and full of junk. I cleaned it up and hauled two or three loads of bark from the mill and spread it over there."

Jepsen recalls the time when Smith came to the city council with a request to use city water and permission to plant more trees. Both were granted.

"And he could take care

of it to suit himself," Jepsen says. "It's a city park. He's got some beautiful trees in there."

Smith continued to maintain the property and the trees over the years. He also used to clean up along Shobe Creek and keep the area mowed.

Rayburn says her parents' dedication to the land always impressed her.

"I thought it was really cool; my parents went above and beyond," she says. "They just really cared about the community and wanted to do what they could to beautify it."

Jepsen says he wants to see the work Smith has done continue. Specifically, he would like to see a redwood added to the impressive group of trees. He also says he's been trying to get people involved to keep the area cleaned and get the trees trimmed; volunteers from Willow Creek Baptist Church went and cleaned up undergrowth last fall.

"We're trying to preserve the park and make it look good and keep it watered," says Jepsen.

Now, with his own health failing, Smith admits he appreciates the help, as he's slowed down a bit and tends to stick to his own yard—which still boasts an impressive array of roses.

"I love roses," he says.

Eastern Oregon MS Walk planned for April 23 in Heppner

Everyone is invited to join in for the 18th annual Eastern Oregon Walk MS on Saturday, April 23, at All Saint's Episcopal Church, 460 N. Gale Street, Heppner. Registration begins at 9 a.m., with the walk at 10 a.m. Brunch and a prize drawing will follow.

There is still time to pre-register at www.walkMSoregon.com or 1.503.445.8358. Sign-up is also welcome the day of the walk.

Funds raised will go toward MS research, with the intention of realizing the Oregon Chapter's research promise to stop MS in its tracks, restore lost function, and end MS forever.

For more information,



Sixty-four people turned out for last year's Eastern Oregon Walk MS. -File photo

contact Barb Orwick at 541-256-0455 or Taylor Disque at 541-256-0295.

NEIGHBORHOOD NUISANCE

-From PAGE ONE

By David Sykes

Heppner city officials and the city council got an earful Monday night from frustrated homeowners along Water Street who are fed up with one landowner who continues to accumulate junk cars, trash, debris, and carries on activities causing noise and disturbances in the middle of the night. But after listening to all of the complaints, city officials couldn't offer any solutions, or even say when the problems might be solved.

Eight neighbors of 495 Water Street, and some acreage below that address, came to the council to say there is an ongoing problem of junk cars (11 by one neighbor's count), piled up trash, burning trash and late night activity that is keeping them awake at night, degrading their neighborhood and driving property values down. The property they were complaining about, and have made multiple complaints and calls to the sheriff and city hall, is 495 Water St., owned by Tareena Healy. Also a problem is about five acres and a small pasture located on the back side of the home.

"We have people coming and going there at all times of the night," said one neighbor. "They come in there and work on cars at any hour of the night, keeping us up, then when the sun comes up and I have to go to work, they are all asleep."

"We are fed up with it," said one man. "We have just

had enough and we want it stopped."

One neighbor reported hearing explosions twice in the middle of the night on the property. What caused the explosions wasn't clear. The neighbors also complained about large piles of trash on the property, which are sometimes burned, sending clouds of pungent smoke drifting throughout the neighborhood.

The complaining neighbors did not receive good news from the city, however, with officials saying even with stiff new nuisance laws recently passed, there is little they can do about the problems and violations. City manager Kim Cutsforth told the neighbors to keep calling the police; however, even the police apparently have their hands tied. Deputies say when responding to complaints there, or when wanting to check for abandoned vehicles, if the property owners don't allow them on the property to check vehicle license plates and other investigations, there is nothing they can do. Morrow County Undersheriff John Bowles, who is also a member of the city council, said he understands the neighbors' frustrations, but he can't just go on the property without being invited, and when the people in the home see him coming they will refuse to answer the door, or in some cases run out the back door to avoid the police.

The police have tried to use binoculars to see if the vehicles are unregistered and therefore subject to citations for junk cars, but have had little luck. They also cite the lack of police on duty to respond to complaints of noise during the night. One neighbor also said she was reluctant to turn in the violations saying, "As a neighbor we are scared of them."

Cutsforth said the city can cite the property owners with tickets and fines, but in the past the Justice Court Judge has not been very tough on the violators. Cutsforth said recently, however, the Judge has begun to take a harder stance, and she was hopeful some action could be taken. Cutsforth said the city does have the authority to go in and clean up the property, and then put a lien on the property to pay for the cleanup, but the city hasn't done that because it has no funds budgeted for property clean up.

Both Cutsforth and Bowles urged neighbors to keep making complaints to the city and sheriff, so they could build a case against the landowner. Cutsforth said it is a \$250 ticket for maintaining a nuisance property, and when citations add up people can go to jail. "Although no one wants people to go to jail for garbage," she added. "I am sorry," she said about the city's inability to do anything about the prob-

lems, and urged people to take videos of infractions and send them to city hall.

"It's difficult, but we aren't giving up," Bowles said.

In other business at the meeting the council heard a report from city attorney Bill Kuhn, who said Community Counseling Solutions (CCS) is considering building a new office building near Sperry Street, but needs a large swale, or 5-6,000 square foot hole in the ground, in order to proceed. The hole is necessary for CCS to build its approximately 9,000 square foot facility in the flood plain. The city has a swale in the area, which could be designated for use by CCS. Kuhn said it would be a good thing for Heppner to keep the CCS offices in town, and that there would be no detrimental effect or liability if the city lets them use the swale in their flood plain planning. Flood plain construction apparently requires an area for overflow water in the event of flood, and the swale provides that area.

CCS is moving its offices out of the Gilliam Bisbee building in downtown Heppner, and looking for a place to build a new office. Kuhn said they are also looking at an area by the old Kinzua Mill offices, in addition to the site on Sperry St. The council voted unanimously to allow CCS to use the city swale.

RAPE INVESTIGATION

-Continued from PAGE ONE

information to secure a search warrant for the Irrigon residence. While MCSO did not disclose the nature of the evidence that was seized in the search, Snyder was able to develop enough probable cause to arrest the juvenile.

The 15-year-old was transported to the Northeast

Regional Youth Facility and lodged there on one count of first-degree rape, two counts of unlawful sexual penetration, and three counts of first-degree sexual abuse. Matlack reported that the juvenile was to be arraigned by video Tuesday afternoon at the detention facility.

Boardman appoints planning commissioner

At their April 5 council meeting, Boardman City Councilors appointed Jacob Cain to fill a vacancy on the Boardman Planning Commission. He will finish a three-year term ending Dec. 31, 2016. In his letter of interest, Cain said he has been a resident of Boardman for about three years. He said he endeavors to be a productive member of the community and feels the planning commission would be a good place to start.

The planning commission is comprised of seven members appointed by the city council and is a permanent advisory body to the council on matters related to planning and development. The commission holds monthly public meetings to consider land use and zoning matters presented by staff, such as plan amendments, zone changes, conditional use permits, variances and tentative subdivision projects. Meetings are the third Wednesday of each month at 7 p.m. at Boardman City Hall and are open to the public.

In other city business, the council heard a presen-

tation from Lisa Mittelsdorf about her fundraising efforts for building an indoor multi-purpose recreation building for public use. She proposes the city own the building and place it on city property. The council has asked her to bring more details to the next city council meeting.

The council also passed an ordinance updating the city's municipal code regarding property abatement.

The next Boardman City Council meeting will be Tuesday, May 3, at 7 p.m. in the Boardman City Hall Council Chambers.

Students discover Eastern Promise at BMCC



Student's in Erin Heideman's Comm III class, a college level public speaking course, spent time at BMCC this past week working one-on-one with the BMCC Comm III instructor, Cheri Kendrick, and had the opportunity to visit with the college ambassadors. Pictured L-R: Ivy Sandford, Jared Snyder, Jason Juarez, Yaniva Garcia, Tristan Estabrook, Tatum Clark, JJ Hill (BMCC Ambassador Coordinator) and Hannah Padberg. Students have the opportunity to earn three college credits while in high school as part of Eastern Promise. Ione High School offers multiple college course by multiple high school/college instructors for students. -Photo by Erin Heideman

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