

Top hat and tails

Dr. Bill Faragher places a bid on a silent auction item at the annual HopeWest Annual Montrose Gala, "Under the Big Top." The annual fund-aiser held March 19 at the Pavilion benefits palliative care, grief support and hospice services that HopeWest provides. (Special to the Montrose Daily Press/Lu Anne Tyrell)

BLAZE

FROM PAGE 1

was out, left it unattended. It was still smoldering, though, and worked its way onto the Lambert property where it gobbled up a 100x32-foot garage, fewer than 50 feet from the Lambert residence.

Firefighters tried to put themselves between the garage and the

"They were able to save the residence," Weese said.

Leaves in the home's gutters caught fire, and radiant heat from the burning garage caused "pretty good damage" to four personal vehicles. The heat also broke three windows.

"There was a substantial amount of damage to the garage, even exposure to the house. We were able to save the residence, which was a good save, for the limited amount of water we had out there," Weese said.

The fire district set up a dump tank from which engines could draw water, and shuttled water from tender to engine. It took about 20,000 gallons to bring the

blaze under control. "At no time did we run out of

water. The guys did a phenomenal job conserving their water and being able to save that house, put the water where it needed to go," the deputy chief said.

A dollar amount on the damage is pending review by insurance adjustors.

"It's significant," Weese said. The Montrose Police Department interviewed the neighbors whose burning activities sparked the blaze; the fire was accidental in nature, Weese

The neighbors apparently were burning branches and leaves in a 16x20-foot area. They finished and, believing it was out, left to go into town, Weese said

"It (fire) just really went, and went quickly.

The Lamberts had to leave their residence after calling the fire district; the house is still habitable. "The fire district did a good

job," Lambert said. "It was unbelievably hot. ... It

was a violent event." Fires Sunday taxed MFPD resources. Crews were also summoned to a grassfire on Carefree Drive off Marine Road, also a

controlled burn that blew out of

control, Weese said.

That fire shot up the base of the hillside in heavy timber, burning between 5 and 6 acres. No structures were threatened.

The two fires kept crews busy well into Sunday night.

"We were pulling in every resource we could to cover both calls. All of our resources were pretty well used up yesterday. We were able to get it taken care of, thank goodness," Weese said.

He reminded people conducting burns to be extraordinarily cautious, especially with some materials.

"It's got to be cold out. Especially leaves and grass that have been piled, they can sit there and smolder, even though you don't see smoke. You really, really have to watch it," he said.

Even after it appears the fire is out, the piles should be soaked thoroughly with water, particularly in locations where the Lambert property is situated the river bottom.

"There is a lot of woolly wild land. You just have to sit there, maintain it. Soak it down. You have to be so cautious," Weese

POLICY

the WCAF's page, threats that are being reported to authorities.

The Delta County School District cannot discriminate against groups that conform to its policy for the distribution of non-curricular materials, spokesman Kurt Clay said.

"The information on Facebook is not accurate, by any stretch," he said. "They have contacted us about distributing some of their materials. By policy, what happens is that we have a designated area in our schools that we can place non-curricular materials.

"It is not distributed by any person, or anybody from that group or any other group."

The policy states that any group or organization can submit its intended material to the superintendent for approval a minimum of 48 hours prior to the date of proposed distribution.

The superintendent is to approve the distribution, unless it is unacceptable as defined under policy; for instance, if it directly promotes violence, advertises a product, promotes candidacies, interferes with schools or is deemed to be pornographic.

Landman reported that an illustration for one of the brochures had been deemed pornographic -1504 engraving of Adam and Eve in the Garden and depicts them with strategically placed fig leaves.

Clay could not be reached Monday for a followup question regarding that.

Per policy, non-curricular materials are to be left at a designated place, either a half-hour before school and/or during lunch, and/or 15 minutes after school.

Students cannot be forced to accept the materials, and no official or student can interfere with distribution.

"We adhere to the Constitution and fully support the separation of church and state," the district said in a Monday statement. "The district still believes that making non-curricular material available to our students is the correct thing to do."

The policy legally creates an open forum for speech, said Andrew Seidel, staff attorney with the Wisconsin-based Freedom From Religion Foundation. "Our contention has always been this is a bad idea, specifically because the only groups that take advantage of it are religious," he said.

"The way we've chosen to challenge it and shed a little light on this problem is by distributing literature of our own."

Landman said that in December, students

were taken into the Delta Middle School library for research, and a teacher pointed out the table where Gideon Bibles were, telling the students they were free.

An atheist student told her parent, who contacted the district, then WCAF. Literature is not to be handed out during class time or in classrooms, Landman said, referring to the school district's policy.

"It's gotten tremendous attention. We certainly have concerns about the kids. Kids have already been harassed and threatened," she alleged. "We're real concerned about the safety of atheist kids in schools.

The satanic temple was aware of the December dispute, Seidel said, and was waiting to see how it turned out. The only outstanding issue now is whether religious literature should be distributed in schools, he said.

A Facebook message board for Delta drew a mixture of opposition and support from those troubled by the proposed materials to be distributed and those advocating for separation of church and state, irrespective of their personal religious beliefs.

The Western Colorado Atheists and Freethinkers page drew some comments threatening harm if anyone was seen handing out the literature. There was also nonviolent discussion, Landman said.

"Some people say, 'I get it; I don't think religion should be pushed in schools," she said.

The school district is taking steps to counter potential safety issues, Clay said.

"We've contacted our local authorities, and they're working with us on all of those concerns," he said.

The materials are to be dropped off with the school district office, which will then place them per its policy, Seidel said. That strategy will make it easier on everyone concerned, and address backlash that is already brewing, he said.

The distribution date was changed to accommodate scheduled testing in the Delta schools, Seidel said.

"We certainly don't ant it to affect testing in any way. We're happy to work around it," he said.

He's not concerned that the date is April Fool's. "The Bible calls us fools for being nonbelievers anyway," Seidel said.
The approval process

for non-curricular materials is quite involved, Clay said.

"The idea behind all of the First Amendment rights is that everyone can have a say. We can't discriminate against any religion or group as long as it doesn't go against what our policy states,' he said.

Amendment 69 topic for forum, league event

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Writer and filmmaker T.R. Reid will be making two presentations Wednesday on ColoradoCare Amendment 69, an initiative that will be on the November 2016 ballot.

Reid will begin his day as the featured speaker at The Forum at Heidi's Brooklyn Deli at 8 a.m.

At 5:30 p.m. March 23 at the Holiday Inn Express, Reid will address an open session on the topic, sponsored by League of Women Voters of Montrose and Delta Counties.

Both events are free and open to the public.

ColoradoCare is a resident-owned, nongovernmental health care financing system designed to ensure comprehensive, quality, accessible, lifetime health care for every Colorado resident. The benefit package would enhance

249-2471



(Photo Courtesy of Miller Center of Public Affairs)

the comprehensive health care services required by Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act.

Premiums would be collected from Coloradans based on income, and would secure health care regardless of financial circumstance. By reducing administrative and other nonmedical

costs, ColoradoCare would cover all residents and cost less than the current system.

The League of Women Voters of Colorado is supporting ColoradoCare Amendment 69 because its healthcare position agrees with the principles of ColoradoCare.

The Forum meets 8 a.m. at Heidi's Brooklyn Deli Wednesday in the Oxbow Center on South Townsend Ave. Coffee is a dollar and breakfast is available.

Reid has become one of the nation's best-known reporters through his books and articles, his documentary films, his reporting for the "Washington Post" and his commentaries on NPR's Morning Edition.

His 2009 book, "The Healing of America,' became a national bestseller. PBS Frontline made a documentary with Reid, "Sick Around the World.' Reid has made documentary films for National Geographic Television, PBS and the A&E Network. His latest PBS film is "U.S. Health Care: The Good News," which is being broadcast by PBS affiliates around the country.

Reid is a member of the board of the Health Research and **Education Trust and** the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless. He is chair of the Colorado Foundation for Universal Health Care, the state-wide citizens' campaign working to provide health care for every Coloradan.

CPA

Hayes R. Ullemeyer Certified Public Accountant



Accounting • Income Taxes • Business Analysis **Discounts Available**

970.252.8900 • 800.456.1040

Dr. Avery at Avery Chiropractic is proud to announce Avery our new location at CHIROPRACTIC CENTER P.C. 21 S. Lot Ave!

Family Health Accepting New Patients! Care We look forward to seeing

More than 4,000 UNIQUE visitors daily.

(907) 249-2471 • 21 S. Lot Avenue

you at our new office!



No Mess or Smell. Same Day Service! Always Less Expensive than Sanding. Non-toxic, Kid & Pet Safe.

Satisfaction Guaranteed - Each location independently owned & operated

(970) 639-2147 www.MrSandless.com

MONTROSE MEDICINE Comprehensive Healthcare for Adults

News tip or story idea?

editor@montrosepress.com



Welcome Doreen Telisak, MD, the newest addition to the team of Internists at Montrose Medicine.

NOW ACCEPTING NEW PATIENTS.

Call 970-249-7751 or visit MontroseMedicine.com



