

VALLEY

Man gets prison term for cocaine distribution

The Daily Inter Lake

A Kalispell man convicted of distributing cocaine has been sentenced to 40 months in federal prison.

During his sentencing hearing Wednesday in U.S. District Court in Missoula, Craig Coolidge, 32, also was ordered to serve five years on supervised release and fulfill 250 hours of community service.

Agents with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement began investigating Coolidge in December 2007 after an informant revealed Coolidge was buying cocaine in Arizona and transporting it into the Kalispell area, according to court documents.

Investigators were told when Coolidge's next deal would take place, who would drive the shipment back to Kalispell, and even the hotel in Tucson where Coolidge would stay when he flew down to consummate the sale.

Coolidge flew to Arizona to make the buy before returning to Kalispell and then driving down to Tucson to pick up the cocaine.

Investigators confirmed the information and attached a tracking device to a car rented in Kalispell before the driver picked it up for the trip down to Arizona.

After tracking the vehicle from Montana to Tucson and back, agents stopped the car and found approximately 2 kilograms of cocaine.

Agents later found another 840 grams of cocaine, a kilogram of marijuana, \$13,000 in cash and several firearms in Coolidge's residence.

He pleaded guilty in May to conspiracy to distribute cocaine.

Flathead Valley Community College hosts talk on deaf culture

Flathead Valley Community College's Multicultural Affairs program hosts "Words of Silence, a Cultural Expression of the Deaf Culture by Deaf Individuals" on Tuesday.

Community college students and professionals who speak the language will deliver the free program to increase awareness and understanding of the silent word.

Performers include Toni Cancilla, who has 27 years of teaching American Sign Language and interpreting experience; Amber Lang, a student and member of the Kalispell deaf community; Marty Wheeler, the first deaf graduate from the University of Montana; and American Sign Language students Jessaemyn Jeager, Cristie Gunderson, Carly Kacic and Cori Williams.

The presentation is from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Tuesday in the Arts and Technology Building, Room 144, on the college's Kalispell campus.

For more information, call the Multicultural Affairs Office at 756-3945 or e-mail mstembor@fvcc.edu.

Martin City gets federal fire grant

The Martin City Fire Department is one of 11 fire departments in Montana to receive grants from the federal Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The Martin City department will receive \$31,493 for training, first-responder health and safety programs and buy equipment and response vehicles.

The grants were awarded through the department's Assistance to Firefighters Grants program.

When all else fails...



Garrett Cheen/Daily Inter Lake

BIGFORK ESSENTIAL Stuff Project members attend a sauerkraut-making workshop at Clementine's in Bigfork recently.

Bigfork's Essential Stuff Project focuses on sustainability

By CANDACE CHASE
The Daily Inter Lake

What would happen in Bigfork if depleted oil reserves or some other crisis led to sky-high gas prices, shortages and lapses in electrical power?

Edd Blackler, Edmund Fitzgerald, Catherine Haug and Sally Janover of Bigfork asked themselves that question after looking at forecasts of declining oil resources and other global issues discussed at the Olduvai Forum.

The four of them envisioned potentially empty store shelves, no power for freezers, limited gas for cars and scarce, expensive heating oil. At the same time last spring, gas prices were soaring toward wallet-busting highs.

"The four of us decided to pull together what was essential for Bigfork," Haug said.

The Bigfork Essential Stuff Project (ESP) became a vehicle to localize the overreaching issues of sustainability for food, water, fuel, transportation alternatives and a range of other concerns including minimizing man's ecological footprint.

"At first it was just the four of us," Haug said. "Then we started having meetings to get Bigfork involved in community-building."

They picked the fourth Wednesday of each month as the best time to follow up the Olduvai Forum meetings held on the third Wednesday. Both groups meet at 7 p.m. at Clementine's in Bigfork.

"We're both dealing with sustainability but Olduvai strictly gives out information," Haug said. "ESP takes it one step further, building community and supporting things essential."

Haug said that each member of the group has specific interests. She said food was at the top of her priority list as well as the lists of other many other members.

"People express so much interest in food," she said. "I've been making a list of suggestions - 10 out of 11 are food-related."

Food topics explored so far have included sprouting and juicing in June, home canning in August



GOATS ARE fed during a recent Bigfork Essential Stuff Project workshop.

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Catherine Haug

and September and sauerkraut and lacto-fermentation in October. At a second meeting in September, members visited Gayle Prunhuber at her Loon Lake Road home to learn about keeping a goat for milk and cheese.

Suggestions for future gatherings include beer and wine making, making yogurt and cheese, salting meats for preservation and much more.

"These are all things people can make in their home and that don't have to be trucked in," Haug said.

Blackler, another founding member, said these Essential Stuff Project gatherings showed him the avenues of coping with less. "All this has been quite

energizing," he said.

"Through community meetings, we've started thinking of a lot of things we can do."

Blackler found particularly valuable the September meeting featuring a panel on home energy costs. The prospect of soaring heating bills in the community was an initial major concern for him.

"I think that's what kicked my thinker into gear," he said.

To explore the topic, the Essential Stuff Project gathered representatives from Flathead Electric Cooperative, Northwestern Energy, Slitters and Montana Home-works to give their perspectives.

The panel touched on the larger picture of reducing carbon footprints while giving practical advice on retrofitting homes with simple tips such as sealing doors and windows, cleaning furnace filters, adding insulation to high ceilings and insulating attics.

Jeffrey Funk, the driving force behind the Olduvai Forum, described how he used a simple method of wrapping his foundation with blue foam panels to stave off heat loss.

Members learned that

heat pumps, which heat and cool, provide large gains in efficiency. Air-to-air heat pumps offer 200 percent efficiency while geothermal heat pumps offer a whopping 350 percent efficiency compared to the 100 percent for electric heat.

BLACKLER SEES these information-sharing forums focused on this area as the major benefit of the Essential Stuff Project.

"One thing leads to another and ideas come forth," he said. "We find practical ways of getting along with less."

Blackler credits Haug and Fitzgerald as "the real intellectual forces" behind the project. Both he and Haug said that Fitzgerald opened their eyes about the little-discussed problem of oil depletion just as demand has soared around the world.

Fitzgerald spends many hours reading about oil production projections by the International Energy Agency as well as analyses by critics such as the analysts at The Oil Drum. The latter group pokes holes in the underlying assumptions about "proven" reserves and the economic viability

of energy expended in obtaining that oil.

According to The Oil Drum experts, the United States expended one barrel of oil to obtain 100 barrels in the 1930s. By 2000, the number dropped to just 10 barrels garnered for one barrel expended due to geologic realities of deeper, lower-quality product.

The question becomes not so much how much oil exists but how much the industry can obtain at a net energy profit. Fitzgerald fears there's not nearly enough to feed the consumption of our current lifestyles.

He recalls mentioning some of these concerns in the early meetings with Haug, Blackler and Janover.

"We had a few offhand discussions about a local group to look at local needs, given this understanding of the oil depletion," he said.

Fitzgerald remains most focused on the oil and transportation issues. He considers ideas like installing electrical plug-ins and even hitching rails in relevant towns.

"What do you do if oil disappears? We're using a quarter of the world's oil production," he asked. "We know this is coming fairly soon. We'll probably see shortages and rationing."

Fitzgerald said people in Bigfork and the rest of America need to live a much lower energy-consumption lifestyle. He tosses out ideas such as larger local farms and residents learning about planting "the three sisters" — corn, beans and squash — that provide complete nourishment.

"Everyone can do that in their front yard," he said. "These are the things ESP looks at — what are essential needs as distinguished from wants?"

People interested in learning more may join them for their next meeting scheduled after the holidays for the fourth week in January. Meetings announcements are listed in local newspapers including the Daily Inter Lake.

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