

Valley News

JAIL

Continued from Page 1

negligent homicide charge. The judge also sentenced Lane to one year in the county jail on the careless driving charge, which Lane began immediately on Monday. He will serve a six-month jail sentence on the driving under revocation charge but will serve it concurrent to the careless driving punishment. Assistant District Attorney Ashley McCuaig said Lane is responsible for the death of four people in three fatal crashes since 1998, with the first occurring in Saguache County and involving the death of Margaret and Homer Smith, the second in 2013 claiming Blanca resident John Bregg's life and the third in 2016, resulting in Howey's death.

"He says this is an accident," McCuaig said. "No, this isn't an accident. An accident was 1998 ... This isn't an accident."

He referred to the victims' statements that said "this man is no different than a person with a high powered rifle."

None of the victim's family was able to be present at the sentencing on Monday, but several of them wrote letters to the judge describing the loss of their father, grandfather, brother and friend.

McCuaig said there is no sentence that could correct Lane's actions or give Howey's family back what they lost. He said Howey had been caring for his wife of 57 years who had dementia and without him she has been unable to live at home anymore. The family would be asking for monetary compensation for her care, he said.

However, there could be no restitution for the loss of a father, McCuaig added.

He recommended a sentence of three years in the Department of Corrections, the maximum that could be imposed.

"I don't believe three years is long enough, but it's the longest I can ask for," McCuaig said.

He said Lane was not a good candidate for probation because he would just do the same thing again.

Lane's attorney Raymond Miller said Lane has to live with what he has done every day of his life and has paid for his past cases.

"Those are in the past. They have been paid for," he said.

Miller added that Lane is also a father and grandfather, a working man who was hauling a pickup load of hay when

this accident occurred.

He added that it was understandable that Howey's family was righteously vengeful, but Howey's life could not be replaced by taking away Lane's.

Miller said Lane was on his last day of probation for the 2013 case when this accident occurred last year, and he tried to avoid the crash but could not.

"There's not a day goes by Mr. Lane doesn't live with that," Miller said.

Miller requested probation or at most community corrections. He said probation costs \$1,570 while prison costs \$37,950.

Miller concluded that Lane could not bring back the victim of the crash but would if he could.

"There was no ill intent, no malice," he said.

Lane spoke to the judge saying he was sorry and had done everything he could to avoid the accident.

"I have been at the wrong place at the wrong time too many times," he said.

"I am sorry for Mr. Howey and his family. I live with that every day."

Lane said he has agreed never to drive again.

"That's pretty much a prison sentence for me because my business is in New Mexico largely and I haven't been able to go there for six to eight months. I am sorry. If I could bring this man back, I would, any one of them I would."

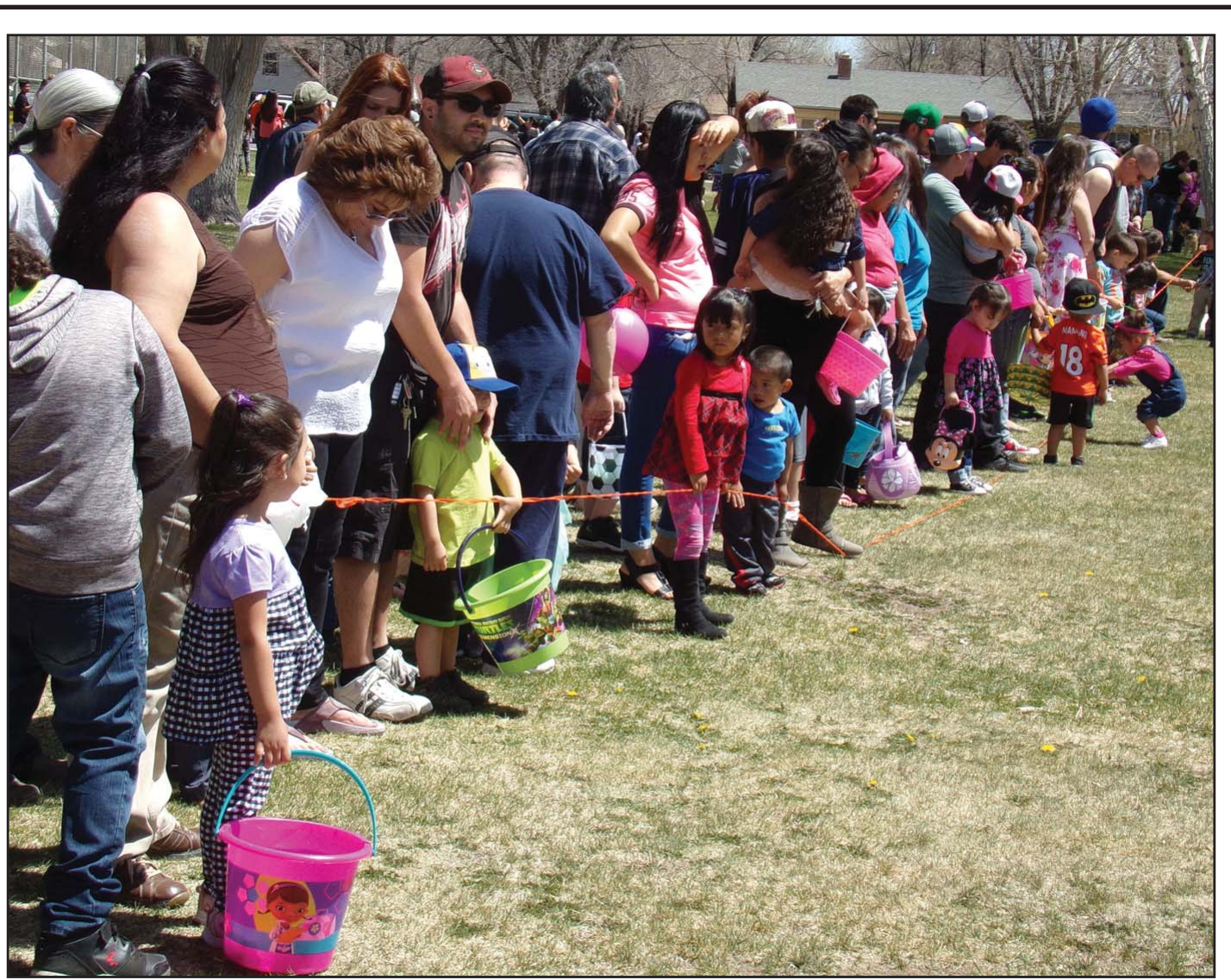
Judge Gonzales read the names of Lane's four victims again and said those were four names he hoped Lane would never forget — "four lives that you took away from four families because of your driving."

The judge acknowledged that Lane did not intentionally go out to kill these people and that Lane was a productive member of the community who works and takes care of his family.

Responding to Lane's statement that he was in the wrong place at the wrong time, Judge Gonzales asked, "How many lives can you take because you are in the wrong place at the wrong time?"

The judge said Lane had a horrible driving record although no other significant criminal history. His driving record ranged from failing to yield right of way and speeding as much as 20 miles over the limit to careless driving and driving under revocation. The judge recounted more than a dozen driving infractions between 1997 and 2016, aside from the fatalities.

"You have no business driving," the judge told Lane. "You are like the angel of death."



Courier photo by Ruth Heide

Eager for eggs

Youngsters line up with their Easter baskets to collect eggs and prizes during the American Legion's Easter Egg Hunt on Sunday in Boyd Park in Alamosa. The youth, ages 1-10, were divided into younger and older groups and then allowed to scour a designated area for eggs, stuffed animals and plastic eggs to be exchanged for prizes.

Leaders gather to discuss Brownfields

STAFF REPORT

RIO GRANDE COUNTY—Local officials from around the Valley gathered on Friday, April 7 to listen to a program provided by Community Builders of Colorado. Representatives from the non-profit organization took turns offering an educational program to the attending crowd and helped answer questions from local real estate agents and property owners wanting to revitalize or reuse their old abandoned buildings throughout the Valley.

The definition of Brownfields is as follows "a term used in urban planning to describe land previously used for industrial purposes or some commercial uses. Such land may have been contaminated with hazardous waste or pollution or is feared to be so." Several areas around the Valley have old industrial buildings or property that fall under the definition of a Brownfields site and hopes are to use them for future projects.

The presentation began with Project Manager Spencer Bollacker with Community Builders who explained the basis behind the program. Bollacker began by explaining that many people, when looking for a place to visit or even reside, look for what he referred to as "walkable places." The term loosely refers to areas where

people can walk to look at storefronts, artistic areas of interest, entertainment like theaters and other businesses that can occupy time and increase interest.

He continued to show the attending crowd how Brownfields sites can be used to make "walkable" locations and showed some success stories from other Colorado communities like downtown Rifle, where an old building was turned into a live theatre and revitalized the town.

Through the Colorado Brownfields Partnership, the town was able to gain funding to help with the project as well as help with the cleanup of potentially dangerous material or chemicals from the previous occupants of the building.

"The program helps create self-sustaining areas of entertainment, parks or other walkable areas that boost the economy," stated Bollacker. He then introduced the next presenter, Jesse Silverstein, senior economist with Community Builders.

Silverstein started the conversation off with pointing out that many people see Brownfields sites all the time and may not realize they are even there. "Most sites are from what we call legacy industries where dangerous chemicals were used in the past," began Silverstein.

Silverstein continued by

asking the attending crowd if they thought Brownfields sites were considered superfund sites by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Silverstein responded to the answers by stating, "no, they are not usually deemed superfund sites by the EPA." The presentation then went into explanation of what the program could do to help clean up the possible site and the procedures they would take to ensure future safety after the removal of potentially dangerous materials.

"Brownfields sites are usually not dangerous; they just need cleaned up and revitalized so that they can be used for other things in the future," Silverstein continued. He also provided links to the group for possible grants that could help

fund certain projects and gave a brief outline of the time frame it takes to apply for funding. "You can make a place safe without extensive amounts of money, thanks to recent scientific advancements in this day and age."

Several area officials and business owners were pleased to learn that under the Voluntary Redevelopment Act, there could potentially be up to \$525,000 in tax credit if they were to use grant funding to help with a cleanup project. The Colorado Department of Public Health also provides tools to help with any potential Brownfields sites; the attending crowd was urged to look into funding options that were available. For more information or a list of links, visit www.communitybuilders.org.

Friends of C&TS to serve alcohol at events

By SYLVIA LOBATO
CUMBRES PASS—Passengers of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad will be able to consume alcoholic beverages at the station on top of the pass on three special occasions this year.

The Conejos Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) April 6 granted special events permits for May 27, opening day of the train season, as well as August 4 and Sept.

22, as the season draws to a close.

Speaking on behalf of the Friends of the C&TS, railroad representative Ed Baudette said each of the events would be a fundraiser for the railroad, which already has liquor service on board.

The special permit application poster will be displayed at the yards in Antonito, since the road to Osier is not yet passable.

Have you heard?

Nusbaum fund-raiser is April 20

VALLEY — A pulled pork community benefit supper for Bonnie Nusbaum from La Garita will be held Thursday, April 20, between 6-7:30 p.m. at the High Valley Christian School on County Rd. E, 1.5 miles west of Hwy 285. Pie auction will be at 7 p.m. Proceeds will go towards Bonnie's medical expenses. Call 719-850-7555.

Farm park celebrates Earth Day

ALAMOSA — The Rio Grande Farm Park will host an Earth Day event on April 22 at the park from 9 a.m. to around 2 p.m. to include social breakfast, safety talk, tree planting, kids activities, tree care talk, tasks and mural creation. Contact Amber Middleton at (608) 295-3424 or volunteers.rgfp@gmail.com or Krista Garcia at (719) 587-1000 or GarciaKr@vwhs.org

Republicans meet Thursday

ALAMOSA — Alamosa County Republicans will meet at noon at Bistro Rialto on Thursday, April 20.

Hospital seeks items for historical display, anniversary

VALLEY — SLV Health is celebrating 90 years as a hospital and is asking the public if they have anything to contribute to their historical display and timeline such as old photos, doctor instruments, etc. Contact Donna Wehe at 587-1209 before April 21.

Cat food appreciated

VALLEY — Generous donations from the Valley community have helped to feed cats and kittens in the San Luis Valley. To donate cat food please call Donna Ditmore at 589-5952 or 580-9078 or drop donations off at 3095 County Road 108 South, Alamosa. Ongoing donations are much appreciated.

SKI-HI 6 SHOWTIMES
West of Alamosa
589-4471

Tues - Thurs: 5:00, 8:10
FATE OF THE FURIOUS
Family no More - Charliz Theron PG-13

Tues - Thurs: 5:40, 8:10
CHIPS
Chip happens R

Tues - Thurs: 5:40, 8:10
HE'S THE BOSS PG

Tues - Thurs: 5:40, 8:20
GOING IN STYLE
You're never too old to get even PG-13

Tues - Thurs: 5:40, 8:05
SMURFS
THE LOST VILLAGE PG

Tues - Thurs: 5:15, 8:10
THE BEAUTY AND THE BEAST
Experience the tale as old as time PG

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