

# DILLON TRIBUNE

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MAKING HEADLINES SINCE 1881 • DILLON, MONTANA • 75 CENTS

## Statewide museum thefts include Dillon, Virginia City, others

By the Dillon Tribune and Associated Press  
Dillon's Assistant Police Chief Paul Craft has been working on solving a number of reported thefts from the Beaverhead County Museum over a period of years.

Two years ago he was able to recover one of several Indian pommel bags that had been stolen over 10 years ago.

A major break in another case, involving a small, toy cannon that had apparently disappeared from the museum a number of years ago, came last week, with the public announcement of solving of many similar cases around the state.

That cannon, which dates to the Spanish American War, had been on display for a number of years, then several years ago, it was missed. For sometime, the museum's past president, Stan Smith said, it was not known whether it had been misplaced in the museum's extensive archives, or removed.

The toy cannon is actually a carbide cannon, that fired a mixture of carbide rock and water to make a loud explosion.

A confession from a California man, Jeffrey Stevens, before his death from a heart attack in November, helped solve the mystery, Craft said.

Last week Craft went to Billings to attend a meeting that highlighted the work of a man who has been called by officials "a serial museum thief."

Although the cannon was not among the collection of items displayed, records show that Stevens had confessed to taking it from the Beaverhead County Museum several years ago.

Records also show the cannon was sold through a Salt Lake antique dealer to a private party last year.

Craft said he is working with the store to hopefully obtain the cannon from the new owner

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## Hildreth sentenced in soliciting charge

Dillon businessman and former religious leader, Clayton Hildreth, 52, has been sentenced to three years and five months in prison for soliciting someone he believed to be a teenage girl for sex on the Internet and then traveling to Boise to meet her.

Until his arrest last year, Hildreth had been a stake president for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

U.S. District Judge Edward J. Lodge sentenced Hildreth on Tuesday of last week.

Hildreth pleaded guilty in October to a charge of interstate travel with intent to have sex with a minor.

During the sentencing hearing, prosecuting attorney Jim Peters reminded the court that Hildreth "portrayed himself as a community leader, a father figure of his church who stood before congregations and preached about living a virtuous life. At the same time, he pursued the thrill of sexual gratification at the expense of a child, without regard for the effect that might have on the child or the people in his community who looked to him for leadership."

Prosecutors said in May 2004, Hildreth, using the screen name "Sexy Montana Gentleman," started an Internet relationship with an undercover Boise police officer posing as a 14-year-old girl. Hildreth moved the conversations from a public chat room to private instant messaging, and initiated discussions of sex.

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## L&C Montana Trail topic of presentation

A Montana Committee for the Humanities Speakers Bureau Program, Lewis and Clark's Montana Trail, will be presented by Rick and Susie Graetz on Wednesday, February 23 at 7:00 p.m. in the Old Depot Theatre in Dillon.

The free presentation is hosted by the Camp Fortunate Chapter of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation.

For more information on the event, contact Bill Kolar at 683-4968.

## PES plans green eggs, ham breakfast

Plan to attend the second annual Green Eggs and Ham Breakfast at Parkview Elementary on Wednesday, March 2. The event recognizes Dr. Seuss's birthday, as closure to February's "I Love to Read Month".

Breakfast will be served beginning at 7:30 a.m. Cost is \$1 for students and \$2 for adults.



Clarissa Kaler and Callie Freeman, both members of the University of Montana Western's Equestrian Team, followed each other during the open rail horsemanship competition Saturday at La Cense Montana's arena. The event, the third to be held in Dillon, drew entrants from universities and colleges in the region.

## Taking it in stride...

The University of Montana Western Equestrian Team worked hard to put on an extremely successful Intercollegiate horse show over the weekend of Feb 19-20th at La Cense Ranch in Dillon.

There was a morning and afternoon show on Saturday and a morning show on Sunday.

Out of six competing colleges, the UMW riders took home many ribbons and awards for their efforts on horseback. President and Team Captain Callie Freeman rode away with the Reserve Champion High Point Rider on Saturday

See EQUESTRIANS on page A-6

## Council affirms officer

By John Barrows

It wasn't an easy evening for Dillon Police Officer Ed Jones as he faced a hostile crowd and a questioning city council.

Jones, who was hired as a Dillon city policeman a year ago, was up for confirmation by the council and transfer from a probationary to a permanent status on the force.

Despite a strong endorsement of Jones by the mayor, Marty Malesich, and Police Chief John Gutcheck, Jones faced criticism from a number of people in the audience.

Over 50 people showed up for the session, many of them voicing their disapproval of Jones.

In the end, however, Jones did receive his confirmation, in a split vote of the council.

Gutcheck, in a formal letter, asked to have Jones confirmed by the council.

He has, Gutcheck wrote, "met the employment standards and qualifications, the educational requirements as promulgated by the Board of Crime Control and has completed his one-year probationary period. Ed Jones is a fair officer and tries, to the best of his ability, to uphold the law equally and consistently for all."

Malesich said he had received several letters from citizens asking him not to confirm Jones, Malesich said

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Marcy Busch Outstanding Woman



Ryann Gibson Outstanding Young Woman

## Jaycee Auxiliary honors Busch, Gibson for service

The Jaycee Auxiliary's 2005 Outstanding Woman and Outstanding Young Woman awards were presented Thursday, with Marcy Busch being tapped at Outstanding Woman and Ryann Gibson named Outstanding Young Woman.

The Beaverhead County High School Flute Choir, under the direction of Chris Kloker, provided entertainment for the event. The choir, with seven members, performed three pieces, including the Star Spangled Banner. They also offered a glimpse into the different members of the flute family, with students playing various versions of the flute.

Kirsten Love from the Jaycee Auxiliary noted of those who serve their community, "They give from the heart and give of their talents."

The awards are given to those who display the following characteristics: good moral character, leadership and willingness to work, service to all, inspiration to others, patriotic and works for the betterment of community and country, loyal to family, friends and others, dependable in all undertakings, and friendly to all

See HONORED on page A-3

## Fiddle music fills the hall

Photos and story by John Barrows

The hills may not have been alive with the sounds of music, but the halls certainly were.

It was plain to tell, as you walked down the hallways at Main Hall, outside the Beier Auditorium, that the fiddlers, 49 in all, were in town, ready to see and saw their melodious way through the annual Dillon Junior Fiddlers Contest.

Held for the second year at the University of Montana Western's Beier Auditorium, the event drew fiddlers from several states to compete.

Contestants as young as four years old took part in the contest, which included all age divisions, including adults.

The evening before fiddle enthusiasts got the opportunity to hear the Bar J Wranglers, who performed at the Beier Auditorium.

The Jackson Hole Wyoming group provided an evening of musical fun and ranch humor.

They are nationally known, and have been featured on TNN with Roy Rogers, Dale Evans and Randy Travis, among others.

The event was held as a fund-raiser for the Junior Fiddlers.

This year's judges for the annual fiddlers contest included Tim Hodgson, four-time Idaho State Champion Fiddler, two-time U.S. Open Fiddler and two-time National Men's Champion Fiddler and member of the "Bar J Wranglers" of Jackson Hole, Wyoming, Joe Sites, eight National Fiddle Titles at Weiser, Idaho in Men's and Adult divisions of Idaho Falls, Idaho; and

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Lisa Horst competes in the Junior Division of the annual Fiddle Contest Sunday while her dad, Randy Horst, accompanies her.