

Man charged in Oregon cliff death strikes plea deal

HOOD RIVER (AP) — A Bend man charged with pushing his girlfriend to her death off a trail in the Columbia River Gorge has pleaded guilty to criminally negligent homicide and coercion after striking a plea deal.

The Oregonian/OregonLive reports that Steven P. Nichols had increased the life insurance policy on 23-year-old Rhonda Casto to \$1 million months before her 2009 death and was charged with murder.

But evidence problems created challenges for prosecutors. The Oregon Supreme Court ruled an interview with Nichols after his arrest was inadmissible. A lead detective also destroyed crime scene and autopsy photos.

Nichols was secretly indicted while living in China and was arrested in San Francisco in 2015.

He received three years of probation, with credit for 19 months of jail time while awaiting trial.

CIVIL WAR: Some 700 students will visit encampment

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it was back home while the men were away at war. The event closes at 5 p.m. on Saturday and 4 p.m. on Sunday.

General admission is \$8; seniors, active military and students, \$5. Family maximum is \$25. Parking is \$5 per vehicle and supports the Boy Scouts.

In the spirit of making history come alive for students, about 110 students, parents, and teachers from Sisters Middle School and from a Sisters homeschool group and schools outside the Sisters area will attend a private School Day on Friday at the Civil War Reenactment. In total, about 700 students, teachers and parents will experience the event.

House on Metolius (<http://www.metolius.com>) is located off Highway 20 north of Camp Sherman, off road 1420.

The event is put on by the Northwest Civil War Council (<http://nwcwc.org>) a nonprofit, living-history organization.

New emergency information network

Local, state, and federal agency partners in Central Oregon are working together to provide the public easy and quick access to joint emergency updates and preparedness/hazard information.

These local efforts started during the Two Bulls Fire in 2014 and are now being expanded as agencies launch the Central Oregon Emergency Information Network, a coalition of partners whose purpose is to provide emergency public information. The network will

serve as Central Oregon's official source for multi-agency emergency updates, preparedness, and hazard information.

In the event of an a multi-jurisdictional emergency, Central Oregon Emergency Information Network updates will be posted online at coemergencyinfo.blogspot.com and on Twitter @COEmergencyInfo.

The Central Oregon Emergency Information Network will be coordinating messaging related to public safety and governmental response to the 2017 Solar Eclipse.

The network's partner agencies include local, state, and federal agencies involved in public safety, health care, land management and education.

Central Oregon Emergency Information Network
<http://coemergencyinfo.blogspot.com>
 Twitter @COEmergencyInfo

American man slain in Mexican state

MEXICO CITY (AP) — A U.S. citizen and environmental activist has been killed in the Gulf Coast state of Veracruz, a hotbed of violence and extortion by drug gangs, authorities and Mexican media said.

The U.S. Embassy confirmed on Tuesday the death of Gordon Strom and declined to comment further out of respect for his family.

The Veracruz state

prosecutor's office said the male victim it identified only by his initials was found dead May 4 in a home in El Zapote, in the municipality of Teocelo, with head wounds caused by a firearm.

La Jornada newspaper reported that the 58-year-old man was discovered at his ranch with his hands and feet tied, and that he had been beaten.

The newspaper said Strom arrived in Teocelo six

years ago and participated in environmental conservation projects such as recycling and water filtration, ran a meditation group for children and adults and advocated for urban gardening and water rights.

On a Facebook page in Strom's name where people left messages of condolences, it said he had attended high school and community college in the Portland, Oregon, area.



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