

## Drownings highlight water safety concerns

An 18-year-old man who was airlifted to the hospital after being pulled from the waters of Lake Phalarope at Black Butte Ranch earlier this month did not survive.

According to Black Butte Ranch Police reports, the young man, an intern employee from India named Tarun Verma, declined a life vest when checking out a pedal board for an excursion on the lake on June 2.

Three witnesses saw a commotion associated with the young man being in distress in the water and responded to the scene on their own watercraft. When the witnesses reached him, Varun was submerged under the water. They pulled him onto the shore unconscious and began CPR immediately. Black Butte Fire medics also responded to treat Verma, and he was airlifted to the hospital from the ball fields at BBR.

BBR police reported that they received word on June 4 that the young man had died.

Marine patrol personnel were still looking on Monday for a 29-year-old Bend man, Michael Mead, missing and presumed drowned at Wickiup Reservoir. Mead and a friend and a dog were in a canoe that overturned at 2 a.m., dumping them into the water. The other man and the dog were able to swim to shore but Mead did not make it.

Searchers were also seeking a man who jumped from the top deck of a pontoon boat

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## Museum event will celebrate desert writing

The High Desert Museum will play host to an annual celebration of writing on desert landscapes on Wednesday, June 26.

Winner of the annual Waterston Desert Writing Prize Nathaniel Brodie will accept his award and read from his prize-winning work "Borderlands" during an evening reception and awards ceremony at the High Desert Museum starting at 6:30 p.m.

"Borderlands" is an essay to be included in a literary nonfiction travelogue that will explore the tensions between rigid man-made borders and ever-changing borders in the natural transition zones of the biologically and culturally diverse landscapes known as the Sky Islands or Madrean Archipelago.

"Borderlands" will weave together the stories of the Apache Wars, the current migrant crises, rewilding schemes, the Rosemonte Copper Mine, and the threatened freedom of movement of endangered species such as jaguar, ocelot, and Sonoran pronghorn.

"I was born and raised in Southern California, a very arid place," said Brodie. "I've been attracted to desert places and traveled around the world to desert places. I lived in Arizona and worked in the Grand Canyon for a decade. I love their stark, severe beauty. Everything has thorns, spikes but also luxurious blooms. Water is miraculous in the desert. There aren't many desert writing prizes out there. It was a natural fit for me," he said from his Portland home.

Brodie's family moved last year to Portland from Reno, Nevada. His wife got a tenured-track job at Portland State University in Eco-Hydrology. She grew up in

Seattle and loves being back in the Pacific Northwest. "When we drive back over to Central Oregon's high desert and the firs transition into sagebrush, we both love it. She likes the big looming trees and I like the open spaces," he said.

Receiving the award is a great honor for Brodie. "We writers sometimes aren't recognized for the work we do that is not a published book. The vast majority of my writing career is toiling away. I'm lucky enough to have one book published."

The evening also features A Desert Conversation — a group discussion exploring desert ecology and the intersections with human culture, moderated by Ellen Waterston. The 2019 Desert Conversation guest panelists are Oregon Poet Laureate Kim Stafford, noted Western historian and author Patty Limerick and desert writer Bruce Berger.

Nonfiction writer and poet Bruce Berger is best known for a series of books exploring the intersections of nature and culture, usually in desert settings. His newest title, "A Desert Harvest: New and Selected Essays," will be released in March 2019. In a review of *Desert Harvest*, the *Denver Post* said, "Berger takes his place with Annie Dillard and Barry Lopez."

Limerick is the Faculty Director and Chair of the Board of the Center of the American West at the

University of Colorado, where she is also a Professor of History. In 1985 she published "Desert Passages," followed in 1987 by her best-known work, "The Legacy of Conquest," an overview and reinterpretation of Western American history that has stirred up a great deal of both academic and public debate. In 2012 she published "A Ditch in Time: The City, the West, and Water," a history of water in Denver. Limerick has dedicated her career to bridging the gap between academics and the general public and to demonstrating the benefits of applying historical perspective to contemporary dilemmas and conflicts.

Stafford was appointed Oregon's ninth Poet Laureate in May 2018. He is the founding director of The Northwest Writing Institute at Lewis & Clark College. Stafford was born and grew up in Oregon. He is the author of a dozen books of poetry and prose and has edited many others.

His book, "Having Everything Right: Essays of Place," won a citation for excellence from the Western States Book Awards in 1986. Stafford's most recent book, "100 Tricks Every Boy Can Do," is an account of his brother's death by suicide, and the struggle of a family to understand, and to live beyond that event.

The event is free; reservations are requested at the website [www.waterstondesertwritingprize.org](http://www.waterstondesertwritingprize.org).

The evening events are preceded by writing workshops starting at 5:30 p.m. Register at the link above.

Those interested in writing fiction are invited to sign up for critically-acclaimed novelist James Anderson's workshop, in which he will discuss and work with attendees on developing and maintaining a unique and strong sense of place in fiction. Anderson is the author of two critically acclaimed novels, "The Never-Open Desert Diner" and "Lullaby Road," praised by *The New York Times Book Review* and *Washington Post Book World*, among others, for their lyricism and haunting evocation of the desert.

If poetry is more your style, join Oregon Poet Laureate Kim Stafford, author of a dozen books of poetry and prose, for an afternoon of writing and inspiration.

Those who want to explore their own biography of place may enroll in poet and writer Ellen Waterston's workshop, where she will lead writers in an exploration of their own unique biographies of place in poetry and prose.

Attendees will also have an opportunity to purchase the fifth anniversary commemorative Prize anthology titled "Deserts: The First Five Years of the Waterston Desert Writing Prize."

For more information, visit the Waterston Desert Writing Prize website or call 541-480-3933.

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