

# Appeal Tribune

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## Man arrested after head-on crash

WHITNEY M WOODWORTH  
STATESMAN JOURNAL

A head-on crash just west of Silverton hospitalized two people, led to the arrest of a Salem man and closed Silverton Road NE for several hours July 19, officials said.

Jonan Kovac, 28, was driving a Chrysler 300 eastbound on the roadway at around 7 a.m. when his car crossed the center line and struck a westbound car head-on, said Lt. Chris Baldridge, a Marion County Sheriff's Officer spokesman. After the crash, deputies discovered Kovac's blood-alcohol level was almost twice the legal limit.

Witnesses said Kovac struck the car, a Chevrolet Malibu, as he was attempting to get back



Kovac

into the east-bound lane.

The Malibu sustained heavy damage, and fire crews extricated the driver, Jennelle Gasper, 44, of Silverton. She was taken to the hospital with possible life-threatening injuries.

Gasper is a long-term administrative worker for the state of Oregon, said Director of Human Resources Lore Christopher. Her co-workers brought flowers and gifts to her at the hospital. They weren't able to visit personally with Gasper, but her husband promised to update them on her condition,

See CRASH, Page 3A



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MARION COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

## Shifting Geers in Oregon



Visiting children enjoy a presentation at historic GeerCrest Farm.

PHOTOS SPECIAL TO THE STAYTON MAIL

## Family's historic farm still stands

ANNETTE UTZ  
FOR THE STAYTON MAIL

It all started in the early 1600's when two orphaned boys, Thomas and George Geer, were sent by their uncle to America, arriving via ship in Boston. Four centuries later, descendants of the Geer boys are congregating this weekend at the Geer-Crest farmstead in the rural Waldo Hills, located between Silverton and Sublimity, for the triennial national Geer family reunion, hosted by the non-profit GeerCrest Farm & Historical Society.

"Every three years, family members from around the country get together," GeerCrest President and Board Chair Jim Toler said. "We rotate locations and this year we'll be having it here and visiting various sites to celebrate our family history."

The Oregon branch of that history began in 1845 when Joseph Cary Geer Jr. joined a wagon train of approximately 200 families to flee the recession facing Ohio and head to greener pastures in Oregon. From Idaho, the entourage followed Steve Meek on a shortcut straight across Oregon to avoid potential difficulties and encounters with the Walla Walla and Cayuse Indians but unfortunately became lost in eastern Oregon.

While many did not survive the "lost wagon train," Geer made it to the Willamette Valley and prompted his father, Joseph Sr., and the rest of the family to follow suit.



Musa Eoff, aunt of Theodore Geer, hangs with the locals.

After settling near Macleay, Joseph Sr.'s son Herman Geer and his wife Cynthia announced the birth of their son, Theodore Thurston Geer, in 1850. Theodore later served as a Marion County representative for several years and in 1898 was elected the 10th governor of Oregon. Known as the "bicycle governor," he signed the 1899 "cycle path" legislation to create a statewide network of cycling paths statewide. In his enthusiasm, he rode his bike regularly from his Macleay home to the Capitol during his tenure.

Another of Joseph's sons, Ralph Geer, represented Marion County in the Oregon Territorial Legislature. He also established a farmstead in the Waldo

See GEERS, Page 3A

### CREEKSIDE CHAT



JUSTIN MUCH/STAYTON MAIL

Jim Toler, Ed Barradough and Charles Baldwin took part in the Creekside Chat on July 20 at Silver Creek Coffee House.

## Festival set to roll out with bicycle theme

JUSTIN MUCH  
STAYTON MAIL

Wheels will turn when one of Silverton's signature community celebrations rolls out next week; a bicycle theme will front and center while the legendary couch races continue to cruise.

Charles Baldwin sat down at Silver Creek Coffee House on Wednesday, July 20, for a Creekside Chat to impart this year's bicycle themed Homer Davenport Community Festival, while expanding on the broader two-wheeled objectives of Silverton's Bicycle Committee and Friends of Eastside Trails.

Friends of Eastside Trails defines its mission as to promote safe walking and bicycling trails and lanes, as well as bicycle safety, along the east side of Oregon's Willamette Valley.

Meanwhile, Tonya Rue is once again putting her energy behind a festival staple, the couch races, a heart-harbored legacy and tribute to her late mother and mentor, "Barb Rue Memorial Davenport Races."

A third-generation hair stylist, Tonya inherited not only her vocation from Barb, but the races

as well. Tonya speaks of the races in terms of generations, reaching back from mom's memory:

"She was a runner in the races (decades ago), and they started to lose momentum - as those things tend to do - so she just took it over."

So wheeled events for the festival celebrating Silverton's prodigal son received considerable discussion at Creekside in anticipation of the Aug. 5-7 gala.

Friends of Eastside Trails members Ed Barradough and Jim Toler flanked Charles as he listed off the group's goals, successes and long-term visions.

A fun footnote: Jim's also currently occupied with the upcoming Geer Crest Farm reunion (Homer Davenport's maternal family). The state's first native Governor, Theodore Thurston Geer, is reported to have rode his bicycle from his east valley ranch to work at the capitol back around the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries.

Looking just beyond the festival, this August Silverton's bicycle advocates plan to submit an application to gain a bike

See CHAT, Page 3A

## Silverton council approves annexation

CHRISTENA BROOKS  
SPECIAL TO THE STATESMAN JOURNAL

The Silverton City Council annexed and rezoned a 4.87-acre piece of rural property near Pioneer Drive earlier this month, making it possible for developers to build an estimated 20 homes there.

The council's 4-2 decision for annexation — Councilors Laurie Carter and Kyle Palmer voted no — was clouded by concerns that a new subdivision on the property could increase traffic on nearby Jodi and Ryan drives.

"Jodi Drive is a very residential little street,

and it seems to me it would degrade that neighborhood substantially," Carter said.

How a future subdivision would access South Water Street — considering a direct connection to Ike Mooney Road isn't allowed — is a matter developers and the planning

commission will have to work out, said Community Development Director Jason Gottgretu. Concept drawings of street connections are theoretical until an actual subdivision proposal is sub-

See COUNCIL, Page 3A

Online at [SilvertonAppeal.com](http://SilvertonAppeal.com)

### NEWS UPDATES

- » Breaking news
- » Get updates from the Silverton area

### PHOTOS

- » Photo galleries

### INSIDE

- Births .....3B
- Briefs .....2A
- Calendar .....2A
- Classifieds .....3B
- Life .....4A
- Obituaries .....2B



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