

Bigfoot believers gather in Tri-Cities for conference, film festival

■ A three-day conference focuses on the history of Bigfoot starts today

By Phil Wright
East Oregonian

Bigfoot remains big business. The International Bigfoot Conference and Film Festival is in its third year and runs today through Sunday at the Three Rivers Convention Center in Kennewick. The event attracts hundreds, from die-hard Bigfoot believers and enthusiasts to the curious to skeptics. Corissa Howland of Milton-Freewater is among the believers and will trek back and forth from Oregon

all three days of the conference with her aunt from Pendleton. Science didn't verify the existence of the mountain gorilla until 1902, Howland said, and stories about Bigfoot stretch back into the long history of American Indians. She also finds modern reports of the hairy hominid compelling. "With the variety of sightings for the most part being consistent, it stands to reason there very well may be something out there," Howland said. Howland has not had an encounter with the legendary creature, but she recalled her father told of spotting "something" from a distance that looked large and upright. She said when he checked the tree the fig-

ure had been standing near, the height of the branch indicated it was about 8 feet tall. She said if she saw a Bigfoot from some distance away, she would try to snap a clear photo. But she might have a different reaction in a closer encounter. "If all of a sudden I was face-to-face with the big guy, I might be freaking out a little bit," she speculated. The Bigfoot Field Research Organization claims to be the only scientific research organization delving into the mystery. The BFRO collects reports of encounters and publishes that information on its website. The organization's most recent report of an encounter in Oregon was in September 2017 near Dufur

in Wasco County, when archery hunters heard a "loud whoop-type sound" several times. Bigfoot researchers and believers assert Bigfoot makes whoops, yowls and screams. Clackamas County earns the top Bigfoot encounter area with 27 in the organization's database. Josephine County comes in second with 21 and Douglas is third with 17. Umatilla and Lane are next with 16 sightings each. Umatilla County seemed to have a spike in encounters and sightings in the 1990s. The most recent in the database happened in November 2012, when locals heard strange shrieks near Mission on the Umatilla Indian Reservation. The database has one

sighting for Morrow County. Two men in March of 1995 reported they were driving in the dark eastbound on Interstate 84 near Boardman when the driver swerved to avoid hitting a possible juvenile Bigfoot. Howland said her interests have grown in the paranormal and cryptozoology — the study of unknown animals but not an actual science. Her sister is the co-creator of the podcast "The Caravan, The Library of Lore," which explores the paranormal, and Howland has been on that a couple of times. She attended a few hours of the Bigfoot conference last year and said she found the speakers and their theories interesting, including Thomas Sewid of Victoria, British Columbia,

a Canadian First Nations member who spoke of his tribe's legends about Dzunukwa, a type of wild woman of the woods, and her relation to myths of Bigfoot. Howland said she enjoyed the experience and wished she could have stayed longer and mingled a bit. "I'm hoping I can connect with a couple of people this year and kind of chat," she said. If this year's conference attendance resembles the previous, finding someone for a like-minded conversation will not be nearly as much effort as tracking down a Bigfoot. You can find out more about the conference here: <https://www.internationalbigfootconference.com/>

OREGON IN BRIEF

From wire reports

Ex-county health employee arrested on sex abuse charges

PORTLAND — A former Multnomah County Health Department employee accused of sexually assaulting someone in Portland has been arrested in California. KATU-TV reports 64-year-old Sandy Ortiz was arrested earlier this month and has been booked in Multnomah County Jail on two counts of sex abuse. According to investigators, Ortiz met the victim while working at the Multnomah County Health Department's Northeast Health Center.

The investigation started in May 2018 when the victim told police he was sexually assaulted by Ortiz from the summer of 2000 through the summer of 2001 at Ortiz's apartment. Multnomah County Health said in a statement that officials learned that police had contacted Ortiz about abuse allegation in late June. He was placed on administrative leave July 2 and resigned in mid-July. It wasn't immediately known if Ortiz has obtained an attorney.

Liquor Control Commission to seek \$7M in pot taxes

SALEM — The Oregon Liquor Control Commission will ask state lawmakers during the 2019 session for \$7 million in recreational pot taxes per biennium to help track medical marijuana. The Statesman-Journal reported Thursday that the money would provide ongoing funding for the tracking program. Legislators previously appropriated money to start the tracking program and

spokesman Mark Pettinger says 23 positions have been authorized including 16 inspectors. Commission Executive Director Steve Marks said in a statement that their regulatory role over recreational and now medical marijuana as well as additional oversight responsibilities for hemp has greatly expanded the agency's work. Taxes collected on recreational marijuana sales are divided among recipients including schools and the Oregon State Police. State figures show Oregon has brought in more than \$180 million in state marijuana taxes since collections began in 2016.

Bicyclist dies after getting hit by train in Salem

SALEM — A bicyclist has died after being hit by an Amtrak train in Salem. KOIN reports the man was struck Thursday evening and died at the scene. Officials said there are railroad crossing arms at that intersection and they were functioning at the time. Salem police and fire department are investigating.

Seaside woman gets 13 years for driving drunk, killing man

SEASIDE — A Seaside woman has pleaded guilty to driving drunk and killing a man last year. KPTV-TV reports Corissa Barnett pleaded guilty Thursday in connection with the death of 42-year-old Robert Miles of Hammond in October 2017. Investigators say Barnett drove into a police car and then smashed a bus stop near Highway 101, killing Miles and seri-

ously injuring Abdirisak Mohamed of Longview, Washington. Miles died at the scene. Police said Barnett was detained as she was walking away from the scene. Hours later, authorities say blood sample from Barnett showed she had a blood-alcohol content of .24. Barnett pleaded guilty to charges including manslaughter, assault and DUI. She was sentenced to 13 years and four months in prison.

Cop watcher accused of violating stalking order

PORTLAND — A man has been jailed for allegedly violating a stalking order obtained by the Portland police chief after she saw him approach and videotape her while standing outside City Hall during the city-sponsored Hip Hop Day. The Oregonian/OregonLive reports Danielle Outlaw was watching a band perform Sunday when she turned around and spotted Eli Richey. Richey was arrested Tuesday afternoon and accused of violating the stalking order. Richey was scheduled to be arraigned Wednesday but the Multnomah County District Attorney's Office dropped the charge, saying additional investigative work would be done first. In December, Outlaw was granted an indefinite stalking order against Richey for "reckless, repeated unwanted contact" with the chief that caused her alarm. Richey also was restricted

from posting any video of the chief or any of her personal information, and was prohibited from having a firearm. Uber returning to Eugene, Springfield EUGENE — Starting next week, Eugene and Springfield residents will be able to order to an Uber ride from the convenience of their smartphones. The Register-Guard reports Uber announced Thursday that it is returning to the area on Sept. 6 after a three-year absence in the area. Eugene is currently the largest city in the state without ride-hailing services. Uber submitted its application for an operating license to Eugene city of-

officials before its announcement. Uber spokesman Nathan Hambley says the company expects the city will approve the license. Uber suspended operations in the area in 2015 after the city imposed stricter rules on ride-hailing services. The city has since relaxed its rules. It unclear what the rates for rides in Eugene and Springfield will be. Senator proposes lodging assistance for people fleeing smoke MEDFORD — Sen. Ron Wyden is proposing legislation for the federal government to pay for the hotel stays of people fleeing their homes because of wildfire

smoke. The Mail Tribune reports the Democratic U.S. senator's bill would open up an existing Federal Emergency Management Agency program, which covers temporary lodging for people who can't immediately return home following a disaster, to include smoke as an eligible reason for lodging assistance. Wyden says he considers wildfire smoke as a public health emergency. He says the smoke in Oregon and other parts of the West is creating "clean air refuges." Wyden says some details for the Clean Air Refugee Assistance Act still need to be worked out. A cost estimate has not been figured yet.

ROGERS TOYOTA OF HERMISTON

LABOR DAY SALES EVENT

DON'T MISS THIS SALE!

NEW 2018 HIGHLANDER AWD LE \$377/MO On Approved Credit

NEW 2018 CAMRY SE \$288/MO On Approved Credit

NEW 2018 RAV4 LE AWD \$286/MO On Approved Credit

ROGERS TOYOTA OF HERMISTON

541.567.6461 | 1.800.522.2308

1550 N. 1st Street
Hermiston, OR 97838

toyotaofhermiston.com

SERVICE HOURS: MON-FRI 7 am - 5:30 pm SAT 8 am - 5 pm SALES HOURS: MON-SAT 8:30 am - 7 pm SUN 10 am - 5 pm

Thatcher's ACE Hardware & La Grande ACE Hardware

Buy One, Get One FREE

Ace LED Bulb 4/Pk
60 watt equivalent, lasts 10+ years, soft white or daylight.
3565843, 3565884

\$7.99 Each

Ace LED Floodlight Bulb 2/Pk
65 watt equivalent, lasts 10+ years, soft white or daylight.
3565801, 3565819

\$9.99 Each

Now through August 31st

Thatcher's Ace Hardware
2200 Resort St, Baker City • 541-523-3371

La Grande Ace Hardware
2212 Island Ave, La Grande • 541-605-0152

Monday-Friday 7-6 • Saturday 8-6 • Sunday 9-5

photos for illustration only

'FIT in 5' 2018 - Kick-off & Classes

Wish you could hire a personal trainer to help get you into 5K shape? Here's your chance to get fit—for FREE!!

- 1.) KICK-OFF:** Join us on Tues., Sept. 4th @ 5:30PM in our gym at 610 Sunset Drive for an informational kick-off session. We'll discuss our program, stretching, footwear, goals, etc.
- 2.) CLASSES:** 5 Tuesdays @ 5:30PM @ 610 Sunset Drive
Sept. 11 + Sept. 25 + Oct. 9 + Oct. 23 + Nov. 6

'FIT in 5' classes are sponsored by GRH Therapy & Sports Medicine for FREE for the health & wellness benefit to our community.

More info @ grh.org/fitin5 or call 963-1437.

5 Tuesdays could change your LIFE.