

Senior center ‘Meals on Wheels’ volunteer saves Hermiston woman

By **Jade McDowell**
East Oregonian

A Hermiston woman might owe her life to Meals on Wheels. When volunteer Gary Riesland knocked on Glenda Wilcox’s door a couple of weeks ago to deliver a meal, he heard her shouting for someone to call her daughter. He did, and Pam Lincoln arrived to find that her mother had fallen and been lying on her living room floor, unable to move, for more than 72 hours. “He truly did save Mom, because she couldn’t have held out much longer,” Lincoln said, adding that her mom looked “like a zombie” when she found her. Wilcox was severely dehydrated and spent three days in the intensive care unit before being moved to another unit at Good Shepherd Medical Center for additional care. Lincoln said she

had visited her mom that Friday and Wilcox fell on Saturday night. Lincoln hadn’t been planning on stopping by again until the next Thursday, but Reisland was there Tuesday afternoon. Riesland said he and his wife Darlene have been delivering meals for the Hermiston Senior Center for more than 30 years. They started when his mother, who took her meals at the senior center at the time, asked them to consider helping out with delivering meals to homebound seniors who can’t make it to the center. He said they enjoy chatting with people who don’t get many visitors as they drop off meals, and in some cases even return on their own time to visit with people or help them out with small things around the house. During his time delivering meals, Riesland said he has

found people who have fallen, and in some cases after he has alerted family or the police that someone didn’t answer the door, the person has been found deceased. He has also reported cases of elder abuse that have led to law enforcement getting a senior out of a bad situation. In the most recent case, Wilcox didn’t come to the door as usual but he could hear her yelling from the living room. She didn’t answer his questions but repeated over and over again, “Call Pam!” “I knew something was wrong,” he said. The Rieslands returned to the senior center and told vice president Virginia Beebe, who happens to be Wilcox’s cousin. She got in touch with Lincoln, who rushed over to find her mother on the floor, weak and disoriented, and called an ambulance.

Beebe said volunteers will always follow up with emergency contacts if someone doesn’t answer the door when they were supposed to be home. It’s a service that can be just as important as the food provided on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Lincoln said she is grateful that someone besides her is helping keep an eye on her mom after Lincoln’s father died about two months ago. “It’s more than just delivering meals, they deliver friendship and safety,” she said. She said their family will be coming up with better protocols to make sure her mother stays safe while maintaining her independence, and urged other families with elderly members living alone to discuss medical alert bracelets, daily phone check-ins or other safety precautions in case of a medical emergency.

Pendleton woman faces felony charges for allegedly assaulting husband

By **Phil Wright**
East Oregonian

Natasha Mable Watson of Pendleton faces felony charges for allegedly assaulting her husband during a two-week span. Pendleton Police Chief Stuart Roberts said officers are familiar with Watson, and her arrest the night of Oct. 26 led to the revelation of multiple assaults. Roberts said Watson’s husband used Facebook Messenger that night to tell a family member his wife assaulted him, and he sent a digital photo of his injuries. The family member called police. Watson was reluctant to let officers inside the apartment, Roberts said, and after she did, they saw where she slapped her husband on the face. Roberts said the

victim “minimized” the severity of the pain, so police arrested Watson for the misdemeanor domestic violence charge of harassment. “For assault, we have to prove substantial pain,” he said. Officers later questioned the husband, who told them Watson punched him in the face some days before in front of their two young children, according to Roberts, and before that she punched him three times in the face while she was driving and he was the passenger. Roberts said Watson bloodied her husband’s nose that time. Police also interviewed neighbors, Roberts said, and virtually all of them said they witnessed Watson punching

her husband. He said one even recounted Watson holding a child and delivering a blow to her husband’s face. Roberts described the situation in the home as “volatile” and said Watson’s alcohol use and abuse plays a role. The district attorney’s office presented evidence in the case Wednesday to a grand jury, according to court records, which issued an indictment with the following charges: one count of misdemeanor fourth-degree assault, two counts of felony fourth-degree assault and three counts of harassment, also misdemeanors. The state alleges the crimes took place on Oct. 13, 17, 18 and 26. Watson remains in the jail. She has an arraignment on the charges Monday.

OREGON IN BRIEF

From wire reports

University of Oregon signs president to five-year contract
EUGENE — The University of Oregon has signed its president to a new five-year contract that gives him an annual raise of \$60,000. The university’s board approved the new contract in September for Michael Schill, paying him an initial base annual salary of \$720,000, The Register-Guard reported Thursday. Schill got the job in July 2015, and his previous contract was set to expire in 2020. Before going to Oregon, he was the dean of the law school at the University of Chicago.

University trustees said they want to keep Schill, so they’re paying him on a similar scale to presidents at other leading research universities in the West. He will make nearly as much as University of Washington President Ana Mari Cauce and about \$108,000 more than Oregon State University President Edward Ray. “Since arriving on campus more than three years ago, President Schill has demonstrated incredible leadership,” said Chuck Lillis, chairman of the university’s board. “The board is thrilled with the vision, enthusiasm and stability he has brought to the university. “The trustees want to ensure we stay on the current trajectory, and firmly believe that Mike’s abilities, style and character are critical to accomplishing that goal,” Lillis said.

The contract includes a retention bonus of \$200,000 after three years, and he can also earn an annual performance bonus of up to \$200,000. His new contract lasts until 2023.

“I am humbled by the board’s generosity to me in the form of a new contract,” Schill said at the September board meeting.

Deputy fires at man trying to run him over at trailhead
HOOD RIVER — Authorities say a deputy fired shots at a man who tried to run him over at a trailhead parking lot in the Columbia River Gorge. KGW-TV reports that Hood River Sheriff’s Deputy George Economou was walking toward a vehicle in the parking lot of the Mitchell Point Trailhead west of Hood River at about 1:30 a.m. Monday when the vehicle began moving.

Oregon State Police say the driver backed out of the parking spot, drove around the lot and then drove at Economou. Police say Economou fired several rounds at the vehicle, which then crashed into his patrol car and went down an embankment. Police say 50-year-old Lonnie Stinnett of Garibaldi, Oregon, was not injured. Deputies took him into custody on suspicion of driving under the influence and other charges. The Columbia Gorge Major Crimes Team is investigating.

Parents of trick-or-treaters sickened by meth-laced candy
ALOHA — Authorities say the parents of trick-or-treaters in Aloha got sick after eating methamphetamine-laced Halloween candy. The Washington County Sheriff’s Office says deputies responded to a home in Aloha Thursday when they got a call of adults feeling ill after eating candy. Authorities say the parents and two children went trick-or-treating near their home Wednesday in northern Aloha and that the adults ate Sour Patch Kids candy that had been

collected. The parents say the candy appeared to be fully sealed. Deputies say tests on the candy showed the presence of meth. The candy was seized and placed into evidence by the deputies. The adults were taken to a hospital for evaluation. The sheriff’s office has received no other reports of Halloween candy that has been tampered with.

Man sentenced to 17 years in deadly Portland shooting
PORTLAND — An Oregon man convicted in a deadly shooting in Portland’s Old Town was sentenced to 17 years in prison. The Oregonian/OregonLive reports Thomas Dorris was sentenced Thursday after he pleaded guilty last month to first-degree manslaughter, third-degree assault and being a felon in possession of a firearm.

Authorities say Dorris shot 50-year-old Chester “Chaz” Newborn in the neck in June 2016 during a drug deal. His attorney Tony Schwartz says Newborn had taken money from Dorris for methamphetamine, but he did not hand over the drugs. Schwartz says Dorris pulled out his gun and fired three times after he saw Newborn reach to the ground to grab what he thought was a pipe. Prosecutors say the shooting was not in self-defense and there weren’t any witnesses to confirm Dorris’ story.

Vancouver man shot by police in Portland identified
PORTLAND — Authorities say a Vancouver man has been identified as the suspect police shot and wounded earlier this month after they say he fled a traffic stop. The Portland Police Bureau says 29-year-old Jason Leo Hansen remained in a Portland

hospital Thursday and that he’ll be booked into jail when released. Police say on Oct. 19 a Clackamas County Sheriff’s office deputy tried to stop Hansen in a stolen vehicle in Happy Valley but he fled. Police say a chase ensued but that Hansen crashed the car and ran. At some point during a search, police say an officer and a deputy encountered Hansen and shots were fired. Hansen was taken to the hospital. During the incident, police say a Clackamas County Sheriff’s dog bit Portland Police Officer Kameron Fender. Fender was treated at a Portland hospital and released. An investigation is ongoing.

ICE says Oregon sheriff released man accused in wife’s death
PORTLAND — Federal officers say authorities in Portland, Oregon prevented them from taking an undocumented immigrant into custody before his release from jail. The Oregonian/OregonLive reports that the man, 45-year-old Martin Gallo-Gallardo, is charged with murdering his wife after his release from jail. The case spotlights Oregon’s sanctuary law just as voters on Tuesday will decide whether to repeal it.

Multnomah County says they didn’t get the request but can’t recognize civil detainees anyway because of state law. ICE says it placed an immigration hold on Gallo-Gallardo in March when he was arrested in a domestic violence case. He posted bail and prosecutors dismissed assault charges against him when his wife and a daughter wouldn’t cooperate. He was charged this week with murder for allegedly stabbing his wife, 38-year-old Coral Rodriguez Lorenzo.

Seaside struggles most with chronic absenteeism

By **Edward Stratton**
The Daily Astorian

Seaside students continued to struggle the most with chronic absenteeism relative to their peers in Clatsop County and statewide last school year. Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing at least 10 percent of the school year. Nearly one-quarter of Seaside students were considered chronically absent last school year, according to state attendance reports, a nearly 1 percent increase from the year prior and up 7.5 percent from 2014-15. Around one-third of Seaside kindergartners and high schoolers last school year were considered chronically absent.

“I think that we certainly need an improvement in our attendance,” said Sheila Roley, the school superintendent in Seaside. “It has become close to the top of our priority list.” The school district has a highly mobile population, with families sometimes moving out of the district and not letting the district know, Roley said. Families busy with work during the summer also take breaks during the school year to spend time together, racking up absences, she said. The district this year started a colloquium period during which students check in with a teacher or other staff member four to five days a week. Having adult mentors is key to keeping students engaged, along with creating interesting academic opportunities, Roley said. Seaside will soon move to a new K-12 campus in the hills east of the city center. It remains to be seen whether a more rural campus cuts into absenteeism, but the district will be taking certain measures in response to the new location, such as closing campus during lunch, Roley said.

More than one-fifth of students statewide were considered chronically absent last school year. The rate is one of the worst in the nation and has consistently grown worse over the past several years from 15.2 percent in 2013-14. Aside from Seaside, county schools have shown more progress in regards to the absenteeism rate and trended lower than the state. Fewer than 9 percent of the 157 students in the rural K-12 Jewell School last school year were chronically absent, far below the district’s 21.5 percent rate in 2016-17 and 24.5 percent in 2015-16. Jewell’s rate was the lowest in the county, followed by 15.9 percent in Astoria and 16.8 percent in Warrenton. Knappa’s chronic absenteeism rate surpassed the state’s at 21.7 percent last year, but was down from 22.3 percent the two years prior. Astoria’s chronic absenteeism rate last school year decreased by 4 percent overall from 2016-17. The school district recently began the Strive for Five campaign to publicize the importance of attendance. Craig Hoppes, the school superintendent in Astoria, said the district has made a lot of progress, and has seen the results borne out in better test scores, but ultimately wants to get below 10 percent chronic absenteeism. “We’ve never communicated like this at the high school or districtwide to parents about the importance of attendance,” he said of Strive for Five. The rate of chronic absenteeism has traditionally been highest among kindergartners and high school juniors and seniors. While more than one-fifth of kindergartners statewide were chronically absent, the rate was only 10 percent in Jewell, 12.3 percent in Astoria and 12.8 percent in Warrenton. More than 30 percent of kindergartners in Knappa were chronically absent last school year, along with one-third in Seaside.

More than 29 percent of high schoolers were chronically absent statewide, compared to 23.4 percent in Astoria and 24.3 percent in Warrenton. Seaside and Knappa were the only districts to surpass 30 percent and the statewide rate. State schools chief Colt Gill, an appointee of Gov. Kate Brown, has faced criticism for planning to withhold completed school report cards until after the November election. The report on chronic absenteeism was due out more than a week ago, but had been tentatively pushed back to Nov. 1 without explanation before a surprise decision to release complete school performance data Friday, according to The Oregonian. The state recently created its own attendance campaign, Every Day Matters, as part of a goal of Brown’s to have 90 percent of incoming high school freshmen graduate with a diploma or through a GED exam. “We know that every day a student attends school means an additional opportunity for learning,” Gill said in a news release. “Our Every Day Matters campaign is one part of a larger effort throughout the state to improve attendance. Reducing chronic absenteeism requires all of us to do our part. Schools need to make sure students are welcomed and engaged. Families need to recognize the importance of attendance and every community needs to look at local barriers that can impact student attendance.”

