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MONDAY • May 27, 2019 • \$1.50

Good day to our valued subscriber Jerry Williams of La Grande

Memorial Day, an idea from the South

By Richard Gardiner
Columbus State University

In the years following the bitter Civil War, a former Union general took a holiday originated by former Confederates and helped spread it across the entire country.

The holiday was Memorial Day, and this year's commemoration marks the 151st anniversary of its official nationwide observance. The annual commemoration was born in the former Confederate States in 1866 and adopted by the United States in 1868. It is a holiday in which the nation honors its military dead.

Gen. John A. Logan, who headed the largest Union veterans' fraternity at that time, the Grand Army of the Republic, is usually credited as being the originator of the holiday.

Yet when General Logan established the holiday, he acknowledged its genesis among the Union's former enemies, saying, "It was not too late for the Union men of the nation to follow the example of the people of the South."

During 1866, the first year of this annual observance in the South, a feature of the holiday emerged that made awareness, admiration and eventually imitation of it spread quickly to the North.

During the inaugural Memorial Day observances, which were conceived in Columbus, Georgia, many Southern participants — especially women — decorated graves of Confederate soldiers as well as, unexpectedly, those of their former enemies who fought for the Union.

Shortly after those first Memorial Day observances all across the South, newspaper coverage in the North was highly favorable to the ex-Confederates.

"The action of the ladies on this occasion, in burying whatever animosities or ill-feeling may have been engendered in the late war towards those who fought against them, is worthy of all praise and commendation," wrote one paper.

Remembering those who SACRIFICED IT ALL

Memorial Day honors those who died while serving in the U.S. military. This tradition, known as Decoration Day, continued until World War I gave Americans a reason to adapt the holiday to celebrate service members who died in all wars. Federal legislation established Memorial Day as a national holiday in 1971.



UNITED STATES MILITARY DEATHS



*Figures reflect the total of battle, in-theatre and not-in-theatre deaths during times of conflict. Data for the Global War on Terrorism was supplemented by the Defense Casualty Analysis System on May 24, 2019; all other data is from an April 2017 report from VA.gov.

Graphic by Emily Adair/For The Observer

MERA receives national recognition

By Dick Mason
The Observer

Trails are rivers of life for the outdoor recreationist, allowing one to voyage into forests without disturbing nature's pulse.

The Union County Mount Emily Recreation Area has many miles of such rivers of life, a trail system now drawing national attention. Union County MERA has received a Recreational Trails Program Achievement Award from the Coalition for Recreational Trails, a national organization.

"This is fantastic news. It means a lot to be recognized on the national level," said Sean

Chambers, manager of the Mount Emily Recreation Area.

He said the award will send an important message about MERA throughout the region.

"The open sign is on and it is glowing," he said.

Chambers said that much of the credit for the award goes to the many volunteers and organizations who have assisted with trail work since work on the MERA network began. These volunteers include Lannce Colburn, chairman of MERA's advisory council, who submitted a written document nominating Union County MERA for the award.

"It was very well-written," Chambers said. "Colburn" expressed the MERA project very well."

MERA's award will be presented at a ceremony June 11 in Washington, D.C., on Capitol Hill. The event will be conducted by the Coalition for Recreational Trails, which provides funds to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both non-motorized and motorized recreational trail uses. Chambers said that someone representing Union County MERA may be present to accept the award.

The award MERA won

is in the Multiple-Use Management and Corridor Sharing category. The category is for organizations that have facilitated and encouraged the use of a trail corridor by more than one type of trail enthusiast, particularly those enthusiasts who often do not ordinarily share trails or trail-related facilities.

MERA allows both motorized and non-motorized recreation. All trails have specific designated uses. He said the trail system is in good condition because many of its users work to make sure everyone who uses the trails also protect their condition.

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Winding Waters doctor earns state award

By Trish Yerges
For The Observer

Dr. Elizabeth Powers of Winding Waters Clinic in Enterprise was recognized as



Powers

Family Doctor of the Year by the Oregon Academy of Family Physicians earlier this month at Skamania Lodge in Stevenson, Washington.

The Oregon Academy of Family Physicians is the largest medical specialty society in Oregon and represents more than 1,600 family physicians, residents and medical students throughout the state. The society honored Powers for her loyal and dedicated service to her patients, her local community and the profession of medicine.

"I feel honored and humbled by this award," she said. "It is a weighty thing to be recognized by my colleagues in Oregon for my service to community and to my profession."

As a family physician, Powers sees patients of all ages in the clinic, in the hospital, in their homes and from time to time in the emergency room.

"I chose the specialty of family medicine because it gave me the skills to diagnose and care for the vast majority of my patients' needs," she said.

Powers' approach to family medicine centers on treating the whole person in the context of their family and community. She strives to develop and sustain continuous healing relationships with her patients that help to maximize their health and quality of life.

In addition to serving her patients, she was honored for her time spent mentoring students and family medicine residents at Winding Waters Clinic, where she has been practicing medicine since 2007. She also serves as a clinical instructor for Oregon Health and Science University.

Powers feels strongly about advocating for patient and community needs.

"I work to influence health care policy through national academy involvement, legislative advocacy, participation in research efforts and academic publication," Powers said.

She has served on the American Academy of Family Physicians Committee on Rural Health, was a resident member of the AAFP

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541-963-3161
Issue 62
2 sections, 16 pages
La Grande, Oregon

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WEDNESDAY

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