

Safe Communities Coalition and partners build online safety awareness

By Kelsie McDaniel
For The Observer

Sometimes we have big ideas we know have the potential to make a difference. Getting ideas on paper to come to life is often the challenge that sets us back or even puts those ideas back on the shelf. But that is not the case for a small group of compassionate and caring community members who want to help our community be healthier and safer.

In 2014, as the Union County District Attorney I was seeing an increase of reports from both school staff and law enforcement of incidents of teenagers making horrible choices in their cellphone use. Whether it be with apps or text messaging and social media, the law was not catching up to the technol-

ogy and kids were clearly not thinking about the consequences. I saw a gap where no one was talking to kids about being safe online and the consequences of the choices they make from behind a phone or computer screen.

Enter the Union County Safe Communities Coalition and the Center for Human Development. Together with the Union County District Attorney's Office, we formed a collaborative committee to put on an annual day-long conference for all Union County seventh-graders. The committee works year-round to select speakers and content that will effectively help kids be healthy both in their interpersonal relationships and online. This is the first event of its kind, bringing middle schoolers from the entire county together to learn about a very real issue in their lives.

We knew we were on the right track with our first keynote speaker. We brought in a young woman whose life had been ruined after texting a topless picture to her boyfriend. She had been shocked when he shared it all over the place, and her life subsequently spiraled out of control. She told the group of seventh-graders that the popular app Snapchat saves all images. There was an audible gasp from nearly every student in the room, who believed the photos had been erased. We knew we were making a difference.

We have also provided an evening session for parents to learn more about technology and parenting skills related to social media and apps.

This year, the committee will be bringing Matt Bellace for the evening parent presentation. He is a comedian and psychologist who will be speaking

on the best ways to talk to teens about difficult topics. The presentation will be on Sept. 12 in the La Grande Middle School Commons. Doors open at 5:30 p.m., and the presentation begins at 6 p.m. Child care and refreshments will be provided for those who pre-register, and it will be livestreamed to the surrounding communities at Stella Mayfield Elementary in Elgin, North Powder High School and Cove High School.

We want the entire community to be able to hear this important information and have worked to make it as accessible as possible. For more information, questions or to register, check out the event on the Union County Safe Communities Coalition Facebook page or call 541-963-1068.

Kelsie McDaniel, Union County District Attorney, is a member of the Union County Safe Communities Coalition.

Timothy & Cathy Stewart — 50th anniversary



Courtesy photo

Timothy and Cathy Stewart, of Walla Walla, Washington, and formerly of Union, recently celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. A brunch party was hosted by friends Lacey Quiggle and John Braswell at their home on Aug. 10. Tim and Cathy were married Aug. 10, 1969, in Union. Tim is a retired U.S. Navy air traffic controller, and Cathy retired from the financial services industry. The couple has two children, Russell and his wife, Tracy, Stewart of New Cumberland, Pennsylvania, and Jennifer and her husband, Mark, Vanfosson of Waynesville, Missouri. They have been blessed with eight grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

Local college students earn academic honors, degrees

Observer staff

College students from Union and Wallowa counties were awarded academic distinctions for their work during the spring of 2019 and have earned degrees in the following fields:

- Morgan Anderson, Enterprise: Montana State University (Bozeman), dean's list (3.5 GPA or higher).

- Sabrina Beckner, Island City: Western Governors University (online), bachelor degree in science and business management

- Emily Best, La Grande: Spokane Falls Community College (Spokane, Washington), honor roll.

- Gracie Carlsen, Lostine: George Fox University (Newberg), dean's list (3.5 GPA or higher).

- Jeffrey Carman, La Grande: Eastern Oregon University (La Grande), initiated into Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi (invitation only, requires nomination and approval by a chapter).

- Kylin Collman, La Grande: George Fox University (Newberg), dean's list (3.5 GPA or higher).

- Whitney Evans, Joseph: George Fox University (Newberg), dean's list (3.5 GPA or higher).

- Anna Gambill, La Grande: Gustavus Adolphus College (St. Peter, Minnesota), dean's list (3.7 GPA or higher).

- Audrey Geissinger, Summerville: University of Minnesota (Twin Cities), dean's list (3.66 GPA or higher).

- Anna Grigsby, La Grande: Colorado College (Colorado Springs), bachelor degree in sociology.

- Eliza Irish, Enterprise: Pacific University (Forest Grove), dean's list (3.7 GPA or higher).

- Delanie Kohr, Union: Central Washington University (Ellensburg), honor roll (3.5 GPA or higher).

- Brianna Mees, La Grande: Eastern Oregon University (La Grande), initiated into Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi (invitation only, requires nomination and approval by a chapter).

- Lovelyn Morgan, La Grande: Maryville University (St. Louis, Missouri), honors list (3.5 GPA or

higher).

- Cade Reed, Summerville: George Fox University (Newberg), dean's list (3.5 GPA or higher).

- Dean Ricker, La Grande: Montana State University (Bozeman), dean's list (3.5 GPA or higher).

- Sarah Robinson, La Grande: Grove City College (Grove City, Pennsylvania), dean's list (3.60-3.84 GPA).

- Katelyn (Katie) Wagner, La Grande: George Fox University (Newberg), dean's list (3.5 GPA or higher); bachelor degree in social work.

- Craig Wallace, Island City: LeTourneau University (Longview, Texas), bachelor degree in mechanical engineering.

- Mackenzie Walters, Joseph: University of Wisconsin (Eau Claire), bachelor degree in science.

- Elias (Eli) Wisdom, La Grande: Pacific University (Forest Grove), dean's list (3.7 GPA or higher); bachelor degree in biology (cum laude); named the university's Outstanding Senior in Biology.

Winners of Keating essay contest named



Courtesy photo

Sixth-grade students from Keating Elementary School participated in the Daughters of the American Revolution national essay contest. Shown here are the contest winners (left to right): Erika Covarrubias, Colton Clark, Liam Blair, Taylor Churchfield and Adrianna Niehaus. In the back are DAR members Joanne Seellhoff (left) and Joan Smith, who visited the students to recognize their achievement.

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BIRTHS

GRANDE RONDE HOSPITAL

BLOODGOOD: To Ariana Joy Bloodgood and Ari Emmanuel Bloodgood, of La Grande, a daughter, Ashira Emmanuel Bloodgood, 8 pounds, Aug. 7 at 2:02 p.m. Grandparents are Matt and Juli Bloodgood, Andrew Miles, and Jill and Jason Foote.

BRANDSTED: To Nicole Ashlie Iwen and Trent Allen Brandsted, of La Grande, a daughter, Tarah Ann Brandsted, 6 pounds 4.2 ounces, July 23 at 12:13 a.m.

DANFORTH: To Amber Danforth and Travis Danforth, of La Grande, a son, Dean Danforth, 6 pounds 14 ounces, July 22 at 3:24 p.m.

DROKE: To Justinn Droke and Craig Droke, of La Grande, a son, Kailor Droke, 7 pounds 6 ounces, July 23 at 1:41 a.m.

GEORGE: To Kaci Rae George and Brandon Garrett George, of Union, a son, Brody L. George, 7 pounds 9 ounces, Aug. 1 at 7:29 p.m.

MCCOWAN: To Ashley Ryan Hansen and Kegan Robert McCowan, of La Grande,

a daughter, Haven Nicole McCowan, 7 pounds 6 ounces, Aug. 10 at 1:58 a.m. Grandparents are Jan Hansen, Jon Cagley, Kerri McCowan and Matt McCowan.

MCGARVA: To Brandi Marie McGarva and Curtis Fraser McKenzie McGarva, of La Grande, a son, Parker James McGarva, 6 pounds 4 ounces, Aug. 3 at 4:33 p.m. Grandparents are Charlie and Dawnita Picard and Troy and Lorie White.

MONCRIEF: To Adri Moncrief and Nick Moncrief, of Union, a daughter, Saylor Ann Moncrief, July 25.

WHERLEY: To MaryAnn Wherley and Johnny Wherley, of La Grande, a son, Kyson Ryder Wherley, 8 pounds 14 ounces, Aug. 6 at 4:23 p.m. Grandparents are Wayne and Satoria Wherley and Milton and Merina Libokmeto.

WALLOWA MEMORIAL HOSPITAL
BATTEN: To Adrienne Gass and Perry Batten, of Joseph, a daughter, Elsa Rose Batten, 7 pounds 10.8 ounces, Aug. 12 at

4:56 a.m. Grandparents are Kertu Maki, Ed Gass, and Carol and Doug Batten.

MUNIZ MENDEZ: To Carolina Mendez Lemus and J. Refugio Muniz Madera, of Joseph, a daughter, Stephanie Muniz Mendez, 6 pounds 15 ounces, Aug. 4 at 3 a.m. Grandparents are Eloisa Lemus Yezpe, Silbestre Mendez Camacho, Magdalena Madera Solis and Antelmo Muniz Munoz.

SCHAEFFER: To Aleksandria Markle and Trevor Schaeffer, of Wallowa, a son, Clayton Henry Schaeffer, 7 pounds 2 ounces, July 6 at 4:25 p.m. Grandparents are Lori Shane, James Markle, Kellie Randall and Randy Schaeffer.

OUT OF TOWN
WILLIAMS: To Kelsey (Skeen) Williams and Ryan Williams, of Redmond, a son, Sterling Wyatt Williams, 6 pounds 4 ounces, July 3 in Bend. Grandparents are Steve and Gayla Skeen of Union, Lenny Williams of Lopez Island, Washington, and Rhonda Stewart. Great-grandmother is Lawanda Laing of Cove.



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