

Couple recognized for service



Courtesy photo

Karen and Corky Hunt were recently recognized by the Oregon Retired Educators Association for outstanding volunteer work in the community. The Making a Difference Award was presented by Gerald Hopkins (left).

BIRTHS

GRANDE RONDE HOSPITAL

Christensen: To Natalie Rose Halladay and Matthew Allen Christensen, of La Grande, a son, Maddux Allen Christensen, 6 pounds 13 ounces, Sept. 26 at 6:24 p.m.

Cox: To Kori Cox and Michael Cox, a son, Hyrum Cox, 8 pounds 8 ounces, Oct. 16 at 12:02 p.m.

Erakdrik: To Lilly Erakdrik and Caster Tataymasa Erakdrik, of La Grande, a son, Cayden Tataymasa Jr. Erakdrik, 5 pounds 14 ounces, Oct. 7 at 12:27 a.m. Grandparents are Bruno and Elanny Clanry, Risa Rubon and Peady Pehmot.

Salinas: To Bethany Maria Barker and Victor Salinas Jr., of La Grande, a son, Solomon Salinas, 7 pounds 15 ounces, Sept. 28 at 7:29 p.m. Grandparents are Eric and Cozy Barker and Preston and Sandy Perkins.

Samaniego: To Ramie Olson and Emmanuel Samaniego, of La Grande, a son, Emmanuel Samaniego Jr., 7 pounds 14 ounces, Oct. 16 at 6:46 a.m.

Verbout: To Aubrey Michelle Verbout and Daylen Kenneth Verbout, of La Grande, a daughter, Winter Rose Verbout, 7 pounds 1 ounce, Sept. 22 at 9:43 a.m.

WALLOWA MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

Gladden: To Amanda Gladden and Justin Gladden, of Enterprise, a son, Kane Iverson Gladden, 5 pounds 7 ounces, Sept. 24 at 4:34 a.m. Grandparents are Sandra and Brian Mueller, Kim Gladden and Jerry Starmer.

Patzke: To Jacquelyn Dee Patzke and Bo James Patzke, of Enterprise, a daughter, Ellie Jo Patzke, 5 pounds 3.5 ounces, Oct. 3 at 4:14 p.m. Grandparents are Tami and Mike Thompson, Linda Simms and Eddie Patzke.

Wilsey: To Lindsay Wilsey and Timothy Wilsey, of Enterprise, a son, Nathan John Wilsey, 5 pounds 15.5 ounces, Oct. 2 at 5:16 p.m. Grandparents are Luanna and Gary Cooper and Natalie and Wesley Wilsey.

Making sure prescriptions, marijuana, alcohol are secured

Our children and teens face many challenges as they grow into adulthood. One of the challenges faced by many of our youth is drug and alcohol abuse, and unfortunately, it is not as uncommon as some may think.

Over the course of my 26 years of service in law enforcement, I have spoken to many parents who were under the illusion that drug or alcohol abuse would not impact their own children. It has been my experience that all too often parents are surprised to learn their child or teen is abusing prescription drugs, alcohol and/or marijuana. Most concerning to me is that the rates of prescription drug misuse and marijuana abuse by our children and teens is increasing.

The reality is prescription drug, marijuana and alcohol abuse by our children is happening in our community. This happens at home, with friends, at school and in activities.

Our children are getting drugs and alcohol free from friends and relatives. Sometimes they buy or steal them from friends or relatives, sometimes they get the prescription drugs from their doctor, and they even get them from drug dealers and strangers.

Sadly, I have found that one of the most common ways our children and teens come into possession of these substances is by freely accessing these items in their own home or their

friends' homes. They simply go to a bathroom medicine cabinet, a kitchen cupboard or bedroom nightstand and take what they want. It's as easy as taking an apple from the basket on the kitchen counter or a soft drink out of the refrigerator.

As adults, we can do a better job of protecting our children from having such easy access to items that will likely change their lives, in a negative way, forever.

If you are a parent or a grandparent, secure and lock up your prescription medications, your marijuana and your alcohol. Even if you are not concerned about your own child or grandchild using or abusing them, if they have friends over, you will need to be careful.

If your teen is prescribed medication, particularly if it's pain pills, you must carefully monitor them. Prescription medication is something that always requires supervision, and it is your job as a parent to keep your child safe.

The issues surrounding the abuse of prescription drugs, marijuana and alcohol in our community and by our children are many and complex. The availability and easy access to prescription drugs, marijuana and alcohol by our children is one of the problems.

To completely interrupt the availability and access to drugs and alcohol by our children is a multifaceted challenge; however, there is something we

can do, with relative ease and immediately, to make it much more difficult for our children to access, use and abuse prescription drugs, marijuana and alcohol. All it will take is for each of us to recognize and acknowledge the problem and secure and lock up drugs and alcohol in our homes.

If you lock them up, these items will be much more difficult for children and teens to access and subsequently abuse. It really is that simple. You can make a difference.

If you have expired, unused and unwanted prescription drugs in your home, you can dispose of them at any time by depositing them in the drop box in the lobby of the La Grande Police Department. Additionally, the LGPD and the Union County Safe Communities Coalition partner twice a year to participate in the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration "Prescription Drug Take Back Day." These events are well advertised and serve as a convenient and confidential manner to dispose of prescription drugs.

Join the La Grande Police Department and the Union County Safe Communities Coalition in our efforts to make a difference. Secure and lock up the prescription drugs, marijuana and alcohol in your home.

Gary Bell is a lieutenant with the La Grande Police Department.

Union resident begins Peace Corps service in Benin

Observer staff

UNION — Margaret Sheehy, of Union, was accepted into the Peace Corps and departed for Benin in June to begin training as a health volunteer.

Sheehy is the daughter of Sally and Jim Sheehy of Union and a graduate of Union High School. She attended the University of Portland, where she earned a bachelor's degree in social

work, psychology and Spanish last spring.

During the first three months of her service, Sheehy lived with a host family in Benin to become fully immersed in the country's culture and

languages, including Bariba, Ditamari, Dendi, Fon, French, Mahi and Nago. After acquiring the necessary skills to assist her community, she will live and work for two years with the local people.

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