

Cook Memorial Library launches new website, services

Observer staff

LA GRANDE — Cook Memorial Library has launched a new website at www.CookMemorial-Library.org along



with a number of other services that will benefit library patrons and members of the community. The website's home page welcomes visitors with bold new colors, a clean design and moving images featuring content that library staff created. Major features of the new site include:

- Automatic adaptation to any computer, tablet or mobile device for the best user experience. The site meets ADA accessibility standards as well.
- Tabs on the home page to lead visitors to new content highlighting library resources, materials and programs.
- Easier access to the library catalog and digital services such as Freegal Music and the Kanopy

movie streaming service.

In addition, the Adult and Family Literacy Center has its own webpages with easier access to information about the Library Commission and the La Grande Community Library Foundation. And online forms now can be submitted with the click of a button.

Library director Kip Roberson in a news release explained that, with changes in technology and continued user demands, it was time to revamp online portal to library services.

WOWBRARY

Cook Memorial Library also implemented the free "Wowbrary" email alerts to showcase the library's newest items each week. The alerts feature the latest best-sellers, movies, audio books and more at the library.

"This is a great new way to enjoy and use your public library more," according to Roberson. "People are truly amazed when they see in one place just how many great new ti-

ties we purchase each week, which they can reserve and borrow at no cost. And we cover all age groups and many diverse interests."

Roberson noted in a news release the Wowbrary alerts are convenient and show what's new, whether the item is checked out or not. The alerts also help those interested in specific topics.

"It only takes a mouse click to see the newest arrivals appropriate for your child or teen," according to Carrie Bushman, the children's librarian. "Here is a separate section on parenting. Teachers can quickly spot new resources for their classes."

Wowbrary alerts are free and do not require a library card. Go to www.wowbrary.org to sign up or learn more.

LIBRARY CENSUS EQUITY FUND GRANT

The Cook Memorial Library also was among 59 libraries nationwide to receive a \$2,000 Library Census Equity Fund grant from the American Library Association

to bolster library services to hard-to-count communities and help achieve a complete count in the 2020 Census.

According to Roberson, Cook Memorial is working with the Elgin, North Powder and Union public libraries plus other community partners across Union County to achieve a complete count of everyone in the county. More than \$1.5 trillion in federal funds are allocated each year to state and local governments based on census data, according to the American Library Association.

"When residents are missed in the census, their communities miss out on needed funding for services such as libraries, schools, health care and transportation," Roberson said.

2020 CENSUS JOB RECRUITMENT FAIR

As part of that effort, the library is hosting a 2020 Census job recruitment fair from 2-4 p.m. Jan. 7. The U.S. Census Bureau is recruiting applicants to assist

with the count in La Grande and Union County. Jobs provide paid training, flexible hours and weekly pay. The recruitment fair is a drop-in, first-come, first-served event. No appointment is necessary.

To be eligible for a 2020 Census job, you must be at least 18 years old and a U.S. citizen, have a valid email address and Social Security number, be registered with the Selective Service System or have a qualifying exemption (if you are a male born after Dec. 31, 1959), pass a background check, commit to completing training and be available to work flexible hours. For more information, go to www.2020census.gov, call 1-855-562-2020 or call the library at 541-962-1339.

For information about why participating in the 2020 Census is important and to understand the unique challenges in rural areas like Eastern Oregon, visit <https://carsey.unh.edu/publication/2020-census>.

LOCAL BRIEFING

From staff reports

Gunfire leads to RV fire

LA GRANDE — Firing a shotgun inside the bedroom of a recreational vehicle in La Grande started a fire.

La Grande police reported officers and firefighters at 5:35 a.m. Tuesday responded to the Sundowner Mobile Park, 1806 26th St., for a fire in the 32-foot long 1987 fifth wheel at space 16.

The La Grande Rural Fire District soon extinguished the fire, according to the report, but the RV sustained heavy damage, leaving it uninhabitable. The vehicle's lone resident, Jacob S. Abrahams, 69, was home when the fire started and got out uninjured.

La Grande police also reported the preliminary investigation indicated Abrahams caused the fire when he intentionally discharged a 12-gauge shotgun through the bed and into the floor.

"The proximity of the muzzle of the firearm to combustible materials, including loose papers, lying on the bed enabled the fire to start," according to police. "No one was injured when the shotgun was discharged."

Officers arrested Abrahams and booked him into the Union County Jail, La Grande, for unlawful use of a weapon. Police also reported the investigation is ongoing and Abrahams could face more charges.

Funeral service Saturday for Slodowski

LA GRANDE — A funeral for Stephen Slodowski will be Saturday at 1 p.m. at the United Methodist Church, 1612 Fourth St., La Grande with reception after.

Slodowski's body was found Dec. 3 in a La Grande storage unit. He started using the unit as his home in March 2018 after facing financial difficulties. He frequented Starbucks and the music store and developing friendships with locals.

Larry Miller, a friend from Beaverton who moved to Cove shortly before Slodowski's move to La Grande, led the efforts for remembering his friend.

"He was a man who kept to himself, but he was friendly," Miller said in a previous Observer article about Slodowski.

Miller, with help from United Methodist Church pastor Taylor Gould, organized the funeral and reception as a way to honor Slodowski and gather those who knew him to share stories.

The reception after the service includes hamburgers. Organizers asked for donations for the food or to the Union County Warming Station. Gould, a board member of the warming station, said Slodowski never stayed the night there but came to play

games, talk and eat a hot meal.

"Since people have been hearing about his passing, we are seeing they have so many stories to tell," Gould said. "There is clearly a need to share these memories and he does not have to die in silence, but rather have his memory fostered in our hearts."

Cove City Council hears speed study report

COVE — The city of Cove will hold its regular council meeting Jan. 7 at 7 p.m. at Cove City Hall, 504 Alder St. The council will consider a speed study report from Rick Stanton of the Oregon Department of Transportation. The council also will hold a public hearing beginning at 7:30 p.m. regarding the conditional use and site plan review for the Bear and Lavender company.

Cove senior meal served Jan. 7

COVE — The Jan. 7 senior meal in Cove will begin at noon with coffee and tea, followed by lunch at 12:15 p.m. in Founders Hall on the grounds of the Ascension School Camp and Conference Center, 1104 Church St. On the menu is meatloaf, mashed potatoes and gravy, green beans, salad bar and rolls with applesauce cake for dessert. There is a \$5 charge

per meal. RSVP by Thursday by calling Imie Bristow at 541-568-4545 or Betsy Arnson at 541-568-4902.

OReGO drivers can avoid registration fee hikes

SALEM — Owners of an electric vehicle or a vehicle that gets more than 40 miles per gallon face higher registration fees effective Wednesday. But the Oregon Department of Transportation announced those owners can avoid the higher fees if they enroll in OReGO at www.myorego.org, Oregon's road usage charge program.

Users of the program pay the base registration fee of \$43 per year plus the road charge.

As a result of 2017 legislation, the state bases its passenger vehicle registration fees largely on the vehicle's fuel efficiency rating. Drivers of more efficient vehicles will pay more to register and renew their tags so they contribute to use of the roads because they pay less in fuel tax, and in the case of all-electric vehicles pay no fuel tax.

Typically, drivers pay two to four years' worth of registration fees when purchasing a car or renewing their registration. Those fees are increasing in 2020 and 2022 for electric and high-mpg vehicles. The cost of four-years registration in Oregon

for a vehicle with 40+ mpg is \$304, and registering an electric vehicle in Oregon for that span will cost \$612.

But if they are enrolled in OReGO, those drivers would pay just the base registration — \$172 for the full four years — plus a monthly road charge of 1.8 cents per mile.

"If you drive an electric vehicle," according to ODOT, "the road charge may amount to a few dollars per month (\$18 for 1,000 miles). If you drive a fuel-powered vehicle, you get credit for fuels tax paid at the pump, which reduces the road charge."

Some drivers, then, could save money by joining OReGO. But if a driver leaves the OReGO program before their registration period expires, the state will bill them for the waived fees.

OReGO has more than 1,600 vehicles enrolled. To learn more, visit www.myorego.org. If you need help signing up, contact OReGO customer service at 503-986-7827 or myOREGO@odot.state.or.us, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Railroad employee groups meet monthly

LA GRANDE — On the second Wednesday of the month, the local N.A.R.V.R.E. (National Association of Retired Veterans Railway Employees) meets at 9 a.m., at Denny's in La Grande. The group will meet this month on Jan. 8. The Union Pacific Employees Club #17 meets at 6 p.m. on the second Tuesday of the month, also at Denny's. The next gathering is planned for Jan. 14.

Mary Alice Crowell

June 18, 1939 - December 21, 2019



Mary Alice Crowell, age 80 died December 21, 2019, at her home. A funeral will be held on Friday, January 3, 2020, at 9:00 a.m. at Our Lady of the Valley Catholic Church in La Grande. Burial will take place at Olney Cemetery in Pendleton, at 2:00 p.m. Those who wish, may make contributions in her memory to any diabetes organization. Arrangements are entrusted to Daniels-Knopp

Funeral, Cremation & Life Celebration Center.

Mary was born on June 18, 1939, the daughter of Carl and Marion (Vent) Kligel in Baker City, Oregon. She attended Catholic School and after graduating high school she attended Marylhurst College and earned an Associate's Degree. On November 22, 1958, she married Barry Crowell in Pendleton, Oregon. They later moved to Tri-Cities until August of 1971, when they moved to La Grande. She did accounting for Waldrop Oil, Connie's Moving and Storage and for her husband's meat plant, River Products, and later became a partner at Automated Bookkeeping and Taxman. In 2008, she opened her own business, Mar's Adventures PC.

She was a member of the J.Cettes when in Pendleton, as well as Women in Business and the Oregon Diabetes Association in La Grande. Having been diagnosed with diabetes when she was only 6-years-old she was very involved with diabetes organizations. She was honored by the American Diabetes Association with the Joslin Award, for staying healthy while both young and as an adult living with diabetes, traveling to Washington DC to receive it. Mary also organized a Bike-A-Thon and Trail Ride for many years to raise awareness and money for the American Diabetes Association. Even arranging for Actor Wildred Brimley to attend a Trail Ride. She was still running her office, Mar's Adventures PC, at age 80 and took great pride and joy in going to work every day. She enjoyed sewing and ceramics and loved spending time with her grandchildren, never missing an opportunity to attend a school function or athletic event.

Survivors include her husband, Barry Crowell of La Grande; children, Steve and Jeanne Crowell of Cove and Carlene and Mark Lester of La Grande; siblings, Connie and Sherry Kligel of Mesa, Arizona, Robert and Mary Kligel of Newberg, Tom Kligel of Pendleton, Or, Judy and Ernie Parker of Pendleton, Or, and Danny and Maggie Kligel of Central Point, Or; five Grandchildren Holli and Nathan Needham, Cheyenne Lester, Delaney Lester, Cabel Adams and Annie Adams; three great grandchildren Nolan Needham, Hadlee Needham and Irie Adams; and many other relatives and friends. She was preceded in death by her parents, Carl and Marion Kligel, her children, Nicholas at birth, Timmy in 1961 and Brother James Kligel in 1993.

PUBLIC SAFETY REPORT

SATURDAY

Oregon State Police arrested Steven Edward Norris, 53, of North Powder, for felony failure to register as a sex offender.

Oregon State Police arrested Isaac Thomas Van Tassel, 18, for driving under the influence of intoxicants (cannabis).

SUNDAY

Oregon State Police reported

a speeding driver in a Pontiac Sunfire passed two eastbound semis on Interstate 84 near La Grande, swerved to make the exit at milepost 265, lost control of the car and struck a metal sign post. An ambulance took the driver, Henry A. Smith, 32, of Laredo, Texas, to Grande Ronde Hospital, La Grande. State police released Smith to the care of the hospital's emergency department but cited him for DUII

(controlled substances), reckless driving and driving uninsured.

MONDAY

La Grande police at about 9:35 a.m. responded to the 2000 block of Gekeler Lane for an attempted burglary.

A caller in Elgin at 3:39 p.m.

reported a dog fight on the first block of 14th Avenue. A Union County sheriff's deputy responded and took a report.

The Union County Sheriff's Office at about 9:45 p.m. responded to the 63200 block of Highway 203, La Grande, on a report of an assault.

Charles 'Ehrman' Bates

November 27, 1925 - December 17, 2019

Charles 'Ehrman' Bates, age 94, of La Grande, died December 17, 2019 at the Grande Ronde Hospital. A memorial service will be held on Saturday, January 4, 2020 at 11:00 a.m. at the First Baptist Church in La Grande. Private burial was held at the Grandview Cemetery. Arrangements are entrusted to Daniels-Knopp Funeral, Cremation & Life Celebration Center.



Ehrman was born on November 27, 1925, the son of Thomas and Laura Emma (Elmer) Bates in La Grande. He graduated from Union High School. He served with the United States Army during the Korean War. After his honorable discharge he returned to La Grande and farmed the rest of his life as well as being a clerk for the Union Pacific Railroad. He married Lorraine Panches in 1949. He was a member of the First Baptist Church and the Blue Mtn. Grange. He enjoyed collecting coins and stamps. He was an avid reader, wood worker and fisherman. He collected train sets and clocks and enjoyed antique shopping with his wife. He and Lorraine were married 69 years before her death.

Survivors include his sister, Anna Brown of La Grande; numerous nieces and nephews; sisters-in-law, Lorraine Bates of Condon and Jacque Panches of La Grande, special family friend, Sandy Franks and other relatives and friends. He was preceded in death by brothers, Elmer, Edward and Ernest. Those who wish may make contributions in his memory to Camp Elkanah in care of the First Baptist Church.

OBITUARIES

Alidean (Chadwick) McMaster

Formerly of La Grande

Alidean McMaster, 97, of Utah and formerly of La Grande, died Dec. 29, 2019. A memorial service will be held at 4 p.m. Jan. 11 at Sunrise Baptist Church in West Valley City, Utah. An obituary is forthcoming.

Virginia Linkenhoker

La Grande

Virginia Linkenhoker, 79, of La Grande, died Dec. 28 at Grande Ronde Hospital. An obituary is forthcoming. Arrangements are under the direction of Daniels-Knopp Funeral, Cremation & Life Celebration Center.

UPCOMING FUNERALS AND VISITATIONS

Sponsored by
LOVELAND
FUNERAL CHAPEL AND CREMATORY

Jan. 3

Nellie Lathrop:

11 a.m. memorial service, Joseph Baptist Church.

Jan. 4

Delpha Hamann:

11 a.m. memorial service, La Grande First Presbyterian Church.

Presblyen McFetridge:

11 a.m. funeral, St. Katherine's Catholic Church, Enterprise; burial follows.