

Union County Safe Communities Coalition: Working together in 2019

By **Glenas Orcutt**

The Union County Safe Communities Coalition had a fruitful year full of partnerships and working together for a safe, healthy, drug-free community.

January and February are typically filled with planning and educational outreach opportunities in Union County.

As part of that effort, we sought to educate and expand capacity among our coalition members as well as our community. In January, a meeting facilitation presentation was held with a seminar follow-up in April on meaningful meetings.

Our Youth Council, consisting of Union County middle school and high school students, is a huge part of our plan in reaching and working with youth. The council participated in Kick Butts Day, Reward and Reminder and Red Ribbon Month and more. The Youth Council also helped at the Union County Fair, the Cove Cherry Fair, the Drug Free Run and the Day of the Dead Celebration.

Kick Butts Day is a national day of activism that empowers youth to stand out, speak up and seize control against big tobacco. The

Reward and Reminder program takes place about once per quarter with youth visiting area merchants that sell tobacco products. The youth try to buy tobacco products to see if the merchant/clerk asks for identification. This program helps educate local retailers about age and ID requirements for purchasing tobacco products.

In March was the annual Oregon Liquor Control Commission ID check training held in partnership with Center for Human Development. A commission representative held two sessions teach participants what the laws are to purchase alcohol, tobacco and marijuana. The Oregon age requirement for these substances is 21.

While our focus is on youth, many of our presentations and messaging efforts are directed to the parents of teens and preteens. In April, the Union County Safe Communities Coalition and Center for Human Development held a "Parenting Is Prevention" town hall on underage drinking.

We also held the National Marijuana Initiative event in May at the Blue Mountain Conference Center, La Grande. The presentation, "Cannabis & Kids, What Do

You Need to Know," featured three nationally recognized experts who talked about the effects of marijuana on youth.

In July, the coalition staff, adult chaperones and three members of the Youth Council attended a Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America training in Dallas, Texas. The mid-year training institute offered in-depth interactive sessions specifically for community coalition leaders and staff. At mid-year, there also are two levels of training for the coalition youth leadership activities. The youth who attend then bring these activities back to their communities to teach at local schools.

Of course, August was all about the annual Drug Free Run held at the Mount Emily Recreation Area. The race featured a 5K, 10K and family fun run. The run raises money through sponsorships and race entries that are used throughout the year for youth substance abuse prevention activities.

The run supports the seventh-grade conference each September, bringing all seventh-graders in Union County to Eastern Oregon University where national and local speakers talk about substance abuse

prevention, bullying, social media, building cultures of dignity and a host of topics that are relevant to that age group. That evening featured community presentations for parents on the same topics.

In September, the coalition was busy promoting National Family Day, which encourages families to eat together. Area restaurants offered discounts on meals to families to encourage them to sit down together, have a great meal and talk to one another.

October brought a host of Red Ribbon month activities with door decorating contests at La Grande Middle School, poster contests at elementary schools throughout the county and our Youth Council Red Ribbon pledge campaign.

With the help of our community partners, the Union County Safe Communities Coalition in 2019 achieved its mission of "Working together for a safe, healthy and drug-free community."

Glenas Orcutt, of Union, is the coalition assistant for the Union County Safe Communities Coalition



Orcutt

Teens invited to join book club

LA GRANDE — Cook Memorial Library is seeking new members for the library's middle and high school book clubs. The next meetings will be held Thursday in the library's Community Room. The middle school club will meet at 3:30 p.m. and the high school club at 4:30 p.m. This is a free activity. For more information, call 541-962-1339, visit the library at 2006 Fourth St. in La Grande or go to www.cookmemoriallibrary.org.

City commissions meet this week

LA GRANDE — The La Grande Arts Commission will meet Wednesday and the Parks & Recreation Advisory Commission will meet Thursday. Each city commission meeting starts at 5:30 p.m. in the Parks & Recreation Office at Pioneer Park. Commissioners are sought for the arts commission. Contact Stu Spence, Parks & Recreation director,

at 541-962-1348 for more information.

Sign up up for Mental Health First Aid

LA GRANDE — Grande Ronde Hospital is sponsoring a Mental Health First Aid Course from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Jan. 16 and Jan. 17. The same eight-hour session will be taught each day in the classroom at the hospital's Pavilion, 909 Adams Ave., La Grande.

Mental Health First Aid is a public education program that introduces participants to risk factors and warning signs of mental health problems, builds understanding of their effects and provides training on how to offer initial help in a mental health crisis. For more information and to register for one of the sessions, call 541-963-1486.

Union County DA appoints special deputy district attorney

LA GRANDE — Union County District Attorney

Kelsie McDaniel appointed Gregory Baxter to take over the prosecution of arson suspect Kael Knight. Baxter is the district attorney for Baker County.

"He started the case and handled it before he was appointed to Baker County," McDaniel said. "He wanted to see it through."

McDaniel said appointments like this are rare in Union County and usually due to a conflict but that is not the case in this situation.

Knight faces several counts of arson. State court records show he has a plea hearing and sentencing Jan. 24.

OTEC seeks candidates for board of directors

BAKER CITY — Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative is seeking candidates for three board of director seats for 2020.

The board positions up for election, which is in May, are: Position 1 — Union County, held by incumbent George

Galloway

Position 2 — Baker County, held by incumbent Aletha Bonebrake

Position 3 — Harney County, held by incumbent Robert Cargill

If you are a member of the cooperative and interested in running for the OTEC Board of Directors, contact the administration at 541-524-2831 or visit otec.coop/annual-meeting-board-elections for nominating committee information, qualifications and applications. The nominating committee recommends candidates for the board elections and is requesting any members interested in running to contact them on or before Jan. 31. Nominations by petition are due by March 3.

EOU receives high rankings for fire, business and education degrees

LA GRANDE — Eastern Oregon University reported several of its programs and services received national

and regional recognitions this year, including a No. 1 spot for its online Fire Services Administration program.

The privately supported website Intelligent.com ranked Eastern's bachelor of science degree in fire service administration as the No. 1 fire science degree. Intelligent also ranked Eastern's newly revived MFA in creative writing as No. 4 among online master's degrees in creative writing, its online master's education degree program No. 20 and the online early childhood education degree at 25.

EOU's College of Business also earned distinctions. Onlineschoolsreport.com ranked the college's online economics degree an No. 9 in the nation. Intelligent ranked the online business administration degree at No. 12. And MBACentral.org ranked Eastern's no-application-fee online master of business administration program at No. 16. And the website Colleges of Distinction re-

cently featured Eastern.

EDsmart.org, a publisher of college resources and rankings, placed Eastern at No. 9 on its list of the top 20 colleges in Oregon for 2019-20. University of Oregon, Eugene, ranked No. 1, and Blue Mountain Community College, Pendleton, rounded out the list at No. 20. Eastern also ranked 10th on study.com's list of accredited online schools.

EOU reported it jumped to No. 77 in U.S. News and World Report's ranking of universities in the West and came in at No. 37 among public schools in the region.

Collegeconsensus.com placed EOU as No. 4 for affordable online colleges, and collegevaluesonline.com set Eastern as No. 5 for the most affordable colleges in the Pacific Northwest. And EOU earned a "bronze" from the website Military Friendly for support of active duty and former members of the U.S. military.

Dona C. (Gildersleeve) Elliott

Imnaha
1927-2019
Dona Carol Elliott, 82, of Imnaha, died Dec. 16, 2019. A service is not planned at this time.

Dona was born July 29, 1937, in Enterprise, to Edgar and Leona (Thornburg) Gildersleeve of Imnaha, joining her sister, Pat. She attended the one-room school until 1949 when the family moved to Enterprise. In 1954, Dona graduated from Enterprise High School, and she married Jim

Elliott Dec. 26, 1955.

Dona loved riding horses and being around her animals. She was a real estate agent, clerical worker and, most important to her, a loving wife, mom, grandma and great-grandma. Dona had a deep love for the Lord and enjoyed getting together with her friends for Bible study.

Surviving relatives include her husband, Jim; children and their spouses, Trisa and Jess Barton of Joseph, Laurie Elliott of Selah, Washington, and Dave and Tera Elliott of Enterprise; six grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren; and sister and brother-in-law Pat and Ken Stein.

Harley E. Greenlee

La Grande
1937-2019
Harley Edward Greenlee, 82 of La Grande, died Dec. 31, 2019, at his residence. At his request, there will not be a service.

Harley was born Nov. 30, 1937, in Picher, Oklahoma, to Harley and Rittie (White) Greenlee. He served in the U.S. Navy aboard the USS Alamo from 1957-1962.

Harley was employed with Boise Cascade in Elgin until retirement. He enjoyed fishing

and listening to music.

Surviving relatives include his wife, Roberta; children and their spouses, Howard and Jana Greenlee of La Grande, Donna and Robert Handegard of La Grande, Gary Greenlee of Bend, Louise and Eric Phillips of La Grande, and Christopher and Mandy Greenlee of La Grande; and 16 grandchildren and 16 great-grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Loveland Funeral Chapel to help with funeral expenses.

Online condolences may be made to the family at www.lovelandfuneralchapel.com.

[lovelandfuneralchapel.com](http://www.lovelandfuneralchapel.com).

Frederick A. Vanslyke

La Grande
Frederick A. Vanslyke, 87, of La Grande, died Jan. 5 at his residence. An obituary is forthcoming. Loveland Funeral Chapel & Crematory will be handling the arrangements.

Barbara A. Amyx

La Grande
Barbara A. Amyx, 86, of La Grande, died Jan. 2 at Wildflower Lodge. An obituary is forthcoming. Loveland Funeral Chapel & Crematory will be handling the arrangements.

UPCOMING FUNERALS AND VISITATIONS
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Jan. 6
Donna Johnson:
2 p.m. funeral service, Cove Baptist Church.

Jan. 18
Virginia Linkenhoker:
2 p.m. memorial service, La Grande United Methodist Church; reception follows in the Fellowship Hall.

PUBLIC SAFETY REPORT

FRIDAY

The Union County Sheriff's Office at about 9:25 a.m. responded to the Island City Walmart, 11619 Island Ave., on a report about an intoxicated driver. Deputies arrested Cecil Kuckup Bettles, 34, of Bosque Farms, New Mexico, for driving under the influence, driving while suspended and felony in possession of a weapon plus violating probation.

The Union County Sheriff's Office at 10:56 a.m. received a request for extra patrols due to thefts on the 10200 block of F Street, Island City.

La Grande police at 6 p.m. received a report from the 300 block of Lane Avenue that a dog bit a person. Police took a report.

A La Grande resident at 7:47 p.m. reported receiving harassing calls.

A little after 11 p.m., La Grande police responded to another report of a dog bite.

La Grande police at 11:34 p.m. received a second report from a resident about harassing calls.

SATURDAY

And at 1 a.m., La Grande police again dealt with harassing telephone calls. An officer contacted the two parties involved, and they seemed to reach a mutual agreement.

A caller in La Grande in the area of 1200 Hall Street at 8:38 a.m. reported livestock on the loose.

La Grande police at about 1:15 p.m. responded to the 2200 block of Island Avenue to check on the welfare of a person having mental health issues. The person was OK and left the area.

Oregon State Police arrested Alexander Crieghton Declue, 22, of Pendleton, for possession of unlawful weapon, possession of methamphetamine, possession of heroin and felon in possession of a weapon, all felonies.

La Grande police at about 2 p.m. responded to the 900 block of 13th Street for a burglary. Police took a report.

A North Power caller at 3:45 p.m. reported two aggressive dogs on the loose on the 400 block of F Street.

SUNDAY

The Union County Sheriff's Office arrested Brian Wurde-man, 41, of Kennewick, Washington, for domestic violence charges of misdemeanor harassment and menacing and felony assault and strangulation.

And firefighters responded to 10 calls for medical assistance on Sunday, five on Saturday and six on Friday.

WOMEN'S & CHILDREN'S CLINIC

PEDIATRIC SERVICES

Did you know the Children's Clinic builds room in their schedule for same-day sick visits?

With the addition of Dr. Zach and Dr. Eve, the Children's Clinic is fully staffed and can accommodate more same-day sick visits than before. These appointments are made on a first come, first serve basis, and are intended for illness or other non-emergent urgent care needs. Parents should continue to schedule well-child appointments in advance with their primary care provider.

If your child needs a same-day visit for illness or other urgent health concern, we encourage you to call the Children's Clinic first for appointment availability.

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541-663-3150 · grh.org/pediatrics

