

COMMUNITY

Meetings

LA GRANDE — Union County Incident Management Team will hold a public meeting Wednesday, April 15, at 6 p.m. to discuss the local response to COVID-19. Due to physical distancing requirements, the meeting will be virtual and live-streamed on the NE Oregon Joint Information Center Facebook page. The team, Union County Board of Commissioners, Grande Ronde Hospital, Center for Human Development/ Union County Public Health, local emergency services and law enforcement, Eastern Oregon University and cities will participate in the meeting from various remote locations. The public may submit COVID-19 related questions for meeting participants by email to neoregonjic@gmail.com. The questions will be discussed during the live-stream as time allows. For more information, call the NE Oregon Joint Infor-

Briefs

Scholarship awards postponed due to virus

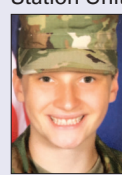
JOSEPH — DeWuhs-Keckritz Educational Trust is postponing the 2020 awards due to the coronavirus. These awards will be made as soon as possible to correspond with the fiscal college/university year by second semester. For more information, call Cheryl at 541-910-1645.

Founded in 2000, the DeWuhs-Keckritz Educational Trust is a private foundation based in Joseph. The trust offers scholarships to high school graduates in Union and Wallowa counties.

Honors

Cove grad completes military police training

COVE — Private Lillian Claire Perry, a 2019 graduate of Cove High School, graduated from Military Police One Station Unit Training at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, on Feb. 18, 2020. The granddaughter of Christine and Richard Miller



of Cove, she was home for two weeks and is now stationed at Fort Drum, New York, with the 91st Military Police Battalion.

Union County students gain BMCC honor roll

PENDLETON — Blue Mountain Community College winter term 2019-20 honor roll recognition went to the following full-time students from Union County:

President's List (3.75-4.00 GPA): Stacey Adams, Roper Bingham, Benjamin Blackwell, Terrance Cambell, Alyssa Pratt, Jessica Reynolds, Kassandra Rossi, Adara Spring, Michelle Williams, Erin Winterton, Isaac Zamora

Vice President's List (3.50-3.74): Harmony Collier, Tonya Evans, Tanner Lee, Logan Nedrow

Don E. Wood

Union

Don E. Wood, 91, of Union, died March 5. As he requested, there will not be a formal service.



Don was a veteran and spent most of his career working in various sawmills during the timber and lumber heydays. He was a prolific reader and avid walker, maintaining his fitness and vigor to the very end.

Surviving relatives include his daughter,

Denise; one grandchild; sister, Shirley; and his significant other, Wendy.

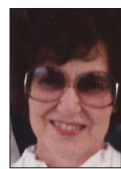
He was preceded in death by his wife, Diana; son, Dallas; and sister, Nellie Mae.

Virginia (Anderson) Johnson

La Grande • 1921-2020

Virginia Johnson, 98, of La Grande, died April 6 at her home. A family graveside service took place April 13.

Arrangements by Daniels-Knopp Funeral, Cremation & Life Celebration Center.



OBITUARIES

Virginia was born May 16, 1921, in Union, to Leo and Evelyn Anderson. She was raised in Union and graduated from Union High School.

She married Alfred Johnson in December 1941.

Virginia enjoyed playing the piano and taught piano lessons for many years. She also enjoyed doing genealogy, spending time with her family and reading.

Virginia was an active member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints throughout her life.

Surviving relatives include her husband, Alfred; sons, Keith of

La Grande, Paul of St. George, Utah, and Russell of Salem; seven grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Evelyn and Leo Anderson, and sister, Niola Jones.

Shirley Gerlinsky

La Grande

Shirley Gerlinsky, 82, of La Grande, died April 11 at a local care facility. Arrangements by Loveland Funeral Chapel & Crematory.

Mary E. McKague

La Grande

Mary E. McKague, 89, of La Grande, died April



Upcoming local services are pending due to efforts to curb the spread of the coronavirus.

12 at a local care facility. Arrangements by Loveland Funeral Chapel & Crematory.

Law enforcement agencies adapt to new normal

Dispatchers, officers implement new screening protocols to minimize risks

By Sabrina Thompson

The Observer

LA GRANDE — Calls to law enforcement have decreased since Gov. Kate Brown issued a stay home order. As one of the essential services that remains operational during the COVID-19 pandemic, the local police department is

adapting to a new normal.

La Grande police Sgt. Jason Hays said the department received 1,132 calls in February, before the stay home order went into effect. In March, with most people inside, calls dropped to 1,064. In March 2019 the police received 1,183 calls.

Dispatchers also are

changing what they do. In addition to usual questions, such as the nature of the situation and the location, dispatchers now ask screening questions regarding COVID-19 in case an officer needs to respond.

Officers do their best to maintain the minimum 6-foot social distancing rule, and if necessary, don personal protective equipment. In the case of an arrest where the suspect shows signs of illness,

police ask the person to put on a mask.

After taking someone to jail, police clean their vehicle. Jail staff also screen incoming inmates for COVID-19 symptoms.

“We are conducting business as normally as possible under the circumstances while utilizing social distancing practices, good hand washing techniques, wearing personal protective equipment, sanitizing our spaces and using

a screening process to minimize risk,” Hays said.

While some complaints have come in from citizens seeing people not practicing social distancing, police are not citing or arresting people for not following such measures. Rather, officers are educating people on the importance of the remaining a minimum of 6 feet apart. For the most part, Hays said, people are following the social distancing order.

Grande Ronde Embroidery gives gifts to retirement community

By Sabrina Thompson

The Observer

LA GRANDE — Barbara and Vernon Hawks, who own Grande Ronde Embroidery, embroidered around 100 hats and bags with “LG” — a La Grande logo — and donated them last week to the Grande Ronde Retirement Residence.

The Hawks completed the hats and bags over a three-day period. The bags have embroidered phrases such as “Live, Laugh, Love” or “Bee Happy” with a bumblebee. Barbara Hawks had the idea after seeing a posting from the retirement home asking for donations for its residence.

“The residents have been in lockdown for a long time. They’re in their rooms so it a pretty lonely place,” she said. “We wanted to do something for the residents and staff and let them know someone loves them and cares for them.”

Grande Ronde Retirement Residence’s executive



Photo contributed by Grande Ronde Retirement Residence

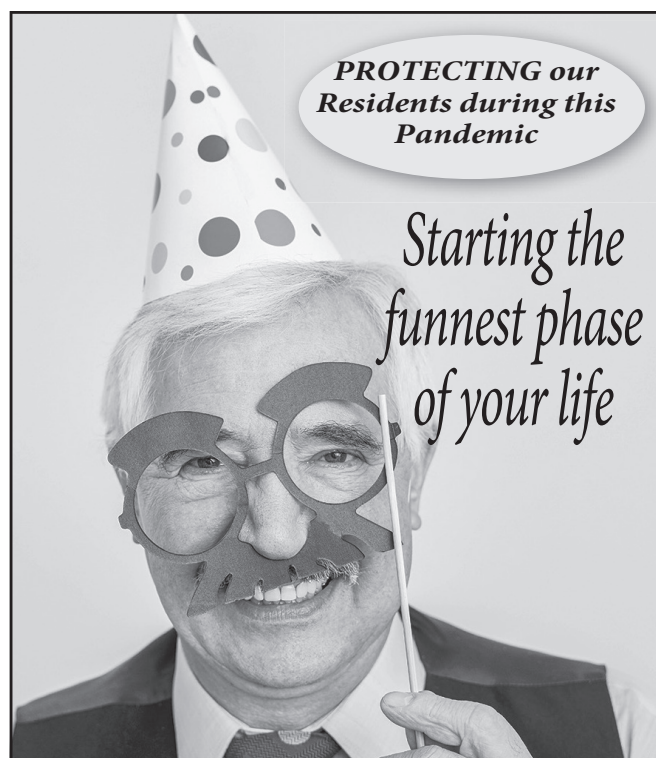
Grande Ronde Retirement Residence resident Duane Germalich received a new shopping bag embroidered with “Live, Laugh Love,” a gift from Grande Ronde Embroidery in an effort to lift spirits and build a sense of community while the residents are isolated due to the coronavirus.

director Melody Johnson explained, “We accepted the donation because right now our residents need a

sense of community. By giving them things our community partners have made them feel like people care even when they aren’t



215 Elm Street La Grande (541) 963-5440



GRANDE Ronde Retirement & Assisted Living 1809 Gekeler Ln. La Grande 541-963-4700

able to be present.”

Other donations to Grande Ronde Retirement Residence from community members and organizations include masks, jewelry and treats for the staff. The retirement residence is ensuring resident safety from the spread of COVID-19 by washing and disinfecting donations per

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines, according to Johnson.

Hawks said they took steps so the items they made do not put people at risk, including washing and disinfecting items before donating.

Johnson said the residents enjoyed their new gifts.

Kenneth Mathias Richter

August 20, 1939 - April 9, 2020



Kenneth (Ken) Mathias Richter of Union, Oregon died Thursday April 9th, 2020. Born on August 20, 1939 in Geribaldi, Oregon Ken was the youngest child of Mathias and Margaret Richter. Ken spent his childhood in Donald, Oregon and attended North Marion High School where he excelled at all

sports and graduated in 1957. Afterwards he joined the Air Force and was stationed at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas where he became a butcher. He married Susan Hammer on September 7th, 1963 and had three children Melissa O’Gorman, Kenneth Richter Jr., and Heather Richter-Thorp. He later divorced. Ken spent most of his work life as the meat department manager at several different Safeway locations in Oregon. After retirement he worked for Bonneville Dam where he hazed sea lions. With his infectious smile, insane wit, and positive attitude Ken made friends everywhere he went. He immensely enjoyed hunting, fishing, scouting deer and elk, elk camp with friends and family, sharing all kinds of stories, camping, canning, inner tubing down the snake river, fishing in Pacific City, his son Kenny’s country music, Gonzaga basketball, the Catholic Church, trips to Troy with his best friend King, off colored jokes, laughter, his pipe and an afternoon drink.

Ken was preceded in death by his mother and father Margaret and Mathias Richter, brothers Allen and Lewis Richter, his daughter Melissa O’Gorman, son Kenneth Richter Jr., nephew Matt Richter and many in-laws and close friends. He is survived by daughter Heather Richter-Thorp, sisters Mary Erb, Loraine Gianella, and Dorothy Koebel, grandchildren Joshua O’Gorman, Sarah O’Gorman, Boon and Kazner Richter and Kaden Thorp. He also is survived by nieces Shannon Johnston, Robin Butts, Becky Richter-Dilly, nephews Fritz Richter, Bob, Jim and Mike Erb, Nick and Joe Richter, Phillip and Keith Gianella, his family at Jodi’s Adult Foster Home, his Troy fishing wife King Spain and numerous friends.

The family would like to give special thanks to Jodi George for the amazing care and love she showed Ken during the last year of his life and the support she has shown his family after his death. Additional thanks to Daniel’s funeral home for arrangements. Services will be held at a later date due to the current national health crisis.

PUBLIC SAFETY REPORT

FRIDAY

1:17 p.m. — La Grande police responded to the 2400 block of Pine Street on a report of a domestic disturbance involving a juvenile. Officers resolved the situation.

1:30 p.m. — The Union County Sheriff’s Office received a report about drug activity on the 100 block of North 13th Avenue, Elgin.

1:38 p.m. — A caller reported vandalism on the 66000 block of Imbler Road, Imbler. A Union County sheriff’s deputy responded and took a report.

6:12 p.m. — The Union County Sheriff’s Office arrested Marcus Sean Hall, 25, for violating a stalking order.

8:31 p.m. — A North Powder called complained about someone setting off fireworks in the area of Fifth and A streets. A Union County sheriff’s deputy checked out the scene but did not find anyone with fireworks.

9:47 p.m. — La Grande police received a complaint about vandalism on the 2200 block of Fir Street. Police took a report.

SATURDAY

8:20 a.m. — La Grande police responded to the 700 block of 20th Street on a call about the theft of coins from a machine. An officer took a report.

10:28 a.m. — A La Grande caller on the 2800 block of Ma-

ple Street complained about a vehicle blocking the driveway.

3:04 p.m. — A Union resident called to complain about a theft. A Union County sheriff’s deputy responded, and the caller decided not to pursue a case. The deputy explained options.

11:01 p.m. — A caller complained about too much noise from a property on the 11000 block of South McAlister Road, Island City. A Union County sheriff’s deputy responded, and the people involved decided to turn down the music.

SUNDAY

2:40 a.m. — The Union County Sheriff’s Office arrested Rebekah Rose Banyard, 28, of La Grande, on accusations of driving under the influence of intoxicants.

3:02 p.m. — La Grande police responded to the 1000 block of Frontier Court on a report of a juvenile who was out of control. An officer talked to the people involved and explained options.

6:15 p.m. — The Union County Sheriff’s Office received a noise complaint on the 10500 block of West First Street, Island City.

7:39 p.m. — La Grande police received a complaint from the 900 block of O Avenue about underage drinking. An officer arrived and counseled the subject.

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