

COMMUNITY

Meetings

• LA GRANDE — The Blue Mountain Translator District Board of Directors will hold a special meeting Thursday, April 16, at 6 p.m. at 1908 Third St., La Grande. The board packet is posted at www.bmtd.org/public-notice. Members of the public may participate via phone. The meeting will be streamed online at www.bmtd.org/ now. The conference number is 669-900-6833, and the meeting ID is 718-5766-6948.

• IMBLER — Imbler School District Board of Directors will meet for a regular session Tuesday, April 21, at 7 p.m., to be conducted virtually. The public is welcome to remotely attend. For instructions, visit www.imbler.k12.or.us or call 541-534-5331.

• LA GRANDE — The La Grande School District board will meet remotely for a board meeting and work session on Wednesday, April 22, at 7 p.m. to hear a report regarding the 2015 Bond Refinance. The meeting is accessible by Google Hangout; online: <https://meet.google.com/ohs-phhu-icf?hs=122>; or by phone: 475-355-7368, PIN: 520 430 842.

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 1972, the trust offers scholarships to high school graduates in Union and Wallowa counties. Previously incorrect information was published; The Observer regrets the error.

Wyden holds online town hall Friday

WASHINGTON, D.C. — U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden will lead a live online town hall hosted by Town Hall Project open to all Oregonians Friday, April 17, beginning at 10:30 a.m. Time slots for live comments and questions have been filled. To view the town hall, go to www.facebook.com/TownHallProject/posts/2560590620862367.

The online town hall is open to all Oregonians, but Town Hall Project has encouraged participation from front-line health care workers, “essential” workers, recently unemployed Oregonians, small-business owners, gig workers, parents of children out of school, and those who have experienced COVID-19 in their family.

Wyden has postponed in-person town halls until there are clear-cut public health guidelines that an open-to-all public meeting poses no unusual health risk for Oregonians.

Skate park, basketball courts closed

LA GRANDE — Stressing in a press release that physical distancing remains the key to protecting yourself and your family against COVID-19, the City of La Grande Parks and Recreation Department has closed the skate park and removed the basketball hoops at Pioneer Park. All playgrounds and restrooms at city parks have been closed. These closures are temporary and have been put in place to assist with physical distancing requirements. The dog park and greenway at Riverside Park remain open.

Rodney D. Payant
Elgin • 1951-2020

Rodney Dale Payant, 68, of Elgin, died March 19 at his residence. A service will be held at a later time.

Rodney was born April 21, 1951, in Caldwell, Idaho, to Lester and Darlene (Talich) Payant.

He was raised in Athena and resided in Elgin. He attended schools in Athena and Treasure Valley. Rodney served in the U.S. Army. He was married to Judy Roberts for 27 years.

Rodney was employed with the Union Pacific Railroad for 28 years. He enjoyed water-skiing, snow skiing, golfing and four-wheeling.

Surviving relatives include his wife, Judy; step-children, Lori Cooney of Joseph, Kara Meyers of Joseph, and Frank Kee and wife, Liz, of La Grande; brothers, Bob Payant of Pendleton and Bryan Payant and wife, Diana, of Pendleton; sisters, Teri Smith of Athena and Tracy Bray and husband, Ron, of Athena; seven grandchildren; and many nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Lester



and Darlene Payant, and brother, Tom “Dooley” Payant.

Online condolences may be made to the family at www.lovelandfuneral-chapel.com.

Mary E. (Ratliff) McKague
La Grande • 1931-2020

Mary Ellen McKague, 89, of La Grande, died April 12 at a local care facility. A graveside service will be held at a later date.

Mary was born March 1, 1931, in La Grande, to Carlton and Myrtle (Griffith) Ratliff.

She resided in California, Florida and Oklahoma but primarily lived in La Grande, which she always considered to be her home. She graduated from La Grande High School in 1949.

Mary loved her high school experience and kept in touch with her peers throughout her life. In high school, she was a member and Worthy Advisor of Rainbow Girls in 1949, and she was the Queen of the Airshow one year. She was also first clarinet in her high school orchestra and band.



OBITUARIES

Mary met her first husband, John Busey, in 1950 and they married in 1951. They were married for 25 years and had four children: John, Tom, Judy and Joanie. She met her second husband, Charles McKague, in 1979 and they married in 1981. They were married until his passing in 2010.

Mary was employed in banking and worked with U.S. Bank and Pioneer Bank in La Grande. She enjoyed the outdoors, camping, fishing, boating, dancing and being with her family and pets. She was also a member of the La Grande Eagles and the American Legion Auxiliary.

Surviving relatives include her children, John C. Busey and wife, Cathy, of Wilsonville, Tom Busey of La Grande, Judy Busey of Keizer and Joanie Dalton of Boardman; four grandchildren; and 12 great-grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Carlton and Myrtle; first husband, John M. Busey; and husband, Charles E. McKague.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the American Lung Association, 16037 SW

Upper Boones Ferry Road #165, Tigard 97224, or to the Blue Mountain Humane Association, 3212 Highway 30, La Grande 97850.

Online condolences may be made to the family at www.lovelandfuneral-chapel.com.

Shirley A. (Larkin) Gerlinsky
La Grande • 1938-2020

Shirley Ann Gerlinsky, 82, of La Grande, died April 11 at a local care facility.

Shirley was born Feb. 23, 1938, in Prineville, to John and Hellen (Demeris) Larkin. She married James Sharp and they later divorced. She then married George Gerlinsky.

Surviving relatives include her children, Clinton Sharp, Janet Tull, Lorie Sharp, all of Meacham, and Glen Sharp and Matthew Sharp and wife, Dawn, all of Hermiston; eight grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her first husband, James E. Sharp, and second husband, George Gerlinsky.

Online condolences





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

may be made to the family at www.lovelandfuneral-chapel.com.

Louise Van Schoonhoven
Cove

Louise Van Schoonhoven, 82, of Cove, died April 15 at her residence. Arrangements are by Loveland Funeral Chapel & Crematory.

Norvin ‘Skip’ Coles Jr.
Formerly of La Grande

Norvin “Skip” Coles Jr., 70, of Baker City and formerly of La Grande, died April 13. Arrangements are by Tami’s Pine Valley Funeral Home and Cremation Services of Halfway.

PUBLIC SAFETY REPORT

MONDAY

10:01 a.m. — La Grande police received a report of two aggressive dogs on the 1700 block of V Avenue. Police determined this was a habitual issue and referred the complaint to the animal enforcement officer.

11:37 a.m. — A La Grande resident reported a burglary on the 1100 block of Benton Avenue.

1:46 p.m. — A caller complained about a construction trailer blocking part of an alley on the 200 block of First Street, La Grande. An officer responded and workers removed the trailer.

5:22 p.m. — La Grande police responded to a call about a theft of gas on the 100 block of Hawthorne Drive. Police took down information and agreed to provide extra patrols.

7:32 p.m. — La Grande police

received a report of harassment at Morgan Lake. Officers responded and talked to the people involved.

TUESDAY

9:45 a.m. — A caller on the 2200 block of Jefferson Avenue, La Grande, asked to talk to an officer about vandalism to a vehicle and residence. An officer responded and took a report.

11:31 a.m. — La Grande police responded to the 1500 block of Adams Avenue on a complaint about a theft. An officer took down information and gave a warning for the misuse of 911.

12:51 p.m. — La Grande police received a report about vandalism on the 1500 block of Adams Avenue. Police will try to provide extra patrols.

1:03 p.m. — A La Grande caller reported a burglary on the 1500 block of 26th Street. Police

took a report.

5:02 p.m. — A Union caller on the 200 block of East Ash Street reported an assault. A Union County sheriff’s deputy contacted the caller and will follow up.

10:04 p.m. — La Grande police responded to the 1600 block of Albany Street on a report of a burglary. Officers arrived and determined there was no burglary.

11:19 p.m. — La Grande police responded to the 300 block of Adams Avenue on a call about a domestic disturbance. Police arrived and resolved the situation.

Recent Oregon State Police arrests:

April 9 — Javier Raul Correa, 29, of La Grande, for driving under the influence of intoxicants.

April 11 — Leonetese Pita Suiaunoa, 31, of La Grande, for DUI.

Fallen Ackles Cemetery headstones restored by cemetery district staff

By Dick Mason
The Observer

LA GRANDE — One of Union County’s oldest cemeteries is again standing tall.

Twenty-one fallen headstones at Ackles Cemetery, almost all of which vandals recently toppled, are back in place.

The maintenance staff of the La Grande Cemetery District handled the work Tuesday. Using a backhoe and monument adhesive, they reattached the headstones to their concrete bases. This was no small task because most of the headstones are made of marble and granite and weigh between 800 and 1,200 pounds.

Crayson McBride and

Marshall Baybado, the two members of the cemetery district’s maintenance staff, handled the work.

“I’m so proud of them. We have a great crew,” said Sue Anderson, manager of the cemetery district, which encompasses Ackles, 5 miles north of La Grande.

Work on the restoration started at 7:30 a.m. and was completed by 2 p.m. Anderson said her staff has become efficient at reattaching headstones due to many acts of vandalism at its cemeteries in recent years.

“We are constantly putting up headstones,” Anderson said.

Vandals in 2009 knocked over 109 headstones at Hillcrest Cemetery on 12th

Street, all of which were later restored. Hillcrest is one of the La Grande Cemetery District’s four cemeteries. The others, in addition to Ackles, are Hillcrest East and Grandview. The cemetery district’s staff also has had to reattach a number of headstones over the years after they fell over due to age.

The desecration at Ackles occurred during the past six months, Union County Sheriff Boyd Rasmussen said Monday. The most recent vandalism likely was early this month.

Memorial Monuments of La Grande assisted with the restoration of the Ackles’ headstones, donating monument adhesive for the project.

Wild & Scenic Film Festival finds new home

The Observer

JOHN DAY — The Blue Mountain Land Trust’s popular Wild & Scenic Film Festival will be made available online and for free.

“For the last five years, we’ve kicked off our education series with the Wild & Scenic Festival. The festival is a collection of the best nature films you’ll ever see,” said Tim Copeland, executive director of the Blue Mountain Land Trust. “We were going to do that this April too. And then COVID-19 stopped us right in our tracks.”

Blue Mountain Land Trust has offices in Walla Walla and John Day and canceled both of its public festivals in the towns in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

“Postponing our festivals until September was a disappointment,” said Copeland. “But when the schools shut, and kids and parents had to stay at home, we wanted to help. To do that, we’re making a big selection of the Wild & Scenic films available online from April 20 through June 14. For free.”

Dorothy Naomi Robertson

July 3, 1929 - April 3, 2020



Dorothy Naomi Robertson, 90, of La Grande, passed away on Friday, April 3, 2020. Due to the unusual circumstances to covid-19 restrictions, a celebration of Dorothy’s life will be planned at a later time to share with family and friends.

Dorothy was born on July 3, 1929 at home on the “Putnam Ranch” in Kimberly, Oregon to Joseph Frederick “Fred” and Virginia Edelweiss “Edel” (Flynn) Roach. Dorothy was home schooled for two years. She rode her horse 3 miles each way to attend a one-room school in Hamilton, OR. She also went to school in Austin before attending high school in Boardman, graduating co-valedictorian, 1946. Once in La Grande, she returned to her education at Eastern Oregon College (EOC) to enroll in various courses focusing on accounting/bookkeeping. She was married to Leonard William Robertson from 1946-2000. She loved that man.

Dorothy’s early married life found her working alongside Leonard on ranches on Deer Creek in Monument, Long Creek and Ritter, Oregon. Leonard’s logging/construction work took them to Bates, Seneca, Burns, and Pendleton. They permanently settle in La Grande in 1956. She worked for Industrial Machinery & Supply, RD Mac and Graham Drug Store, accounting firm, Eveson, Snyder & Lincoln and La Grande Amusement. She also provided bookkeeping services for various individuals. Dorothy enjoyed reading, sewing, riding horses, braiding rugs, genealogy and gardening/canning. She provided entries in Union County Fair receiving Grand Champion for choke-cherry jelly and many recognitions for canned fruit/vegetables as well as her stitchery. She and her “Rug Rat” associate provided live demonstrations on how to braid rugs. As a descendent of pioneer families, she received a Pioneer of Oregon Certificate. Dorothy was a charter member of La Grande Credit Women International, and La Grande Elks Emblem Club. She was a member of Daughters of American Revolution (DAR) Lone Pine Tree Chapter, American Legion Auxiliary #43, Oregon Lon Term Care Ombudsman and La Grande Gun & Rifle Club. Dorothy held various leadership positions in many of the organizations, enjoying her involvement with each one. She was fiercely patriotic.

Dorothy is survived by her daughters, Terry Bonn (Denny) of Bend, OR and Nita Kelly (Don) of La Grande, OR; 4 grandchildren, Clinton Walters, Brian Walters (Cassandra), Clay Kelly (Cheriee) and Reid Kelly; 8 great grandchildren and numerous nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her husband, Leonard; parents, Fred and Edel; sister, Virginia Ray and infant grandson, Christopher Walters. Dorothy is the final member of her family’s generation and family historian. Family was a focus in Dorothy’s life. Her wide circle of friends reflected her wide range of interests. Her wit and wisdom will be missed by family and friends.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions can be made to St. Jude’s Research Hospital, 262 Danny Thomas Pl, Memphis, TN 38105.

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

Community Connection gets funding

By Sabrina Thompson
The Observer

LA GRANDE — Community Connection of Northeast Oregon received \$38,500 in funding from the Oregon Community Foundation in response to COVID-19 concerns.

Community Connection Executive Director Margaret Davidson said the direction of the funding has not yet been determined as the organization evaluates where the money is needed most.

CCNO serves Northeast Oregon, including Baker, Wallowa, Union and Grant counties, as a central non-profit agency, partnering with local food pantries and services for elderly, disabled, low-income and residents in need.

Community Connection has received requests for grocery assistance,

Davidson said, and there is concern about people being able to make rent payments. Davidson explained this can have a trickle down effect on landlords meeting their own financial obligations, which in turn can create a snowball effect on the local economy.

“It is going to be used to serve people,” Davidson said. “In whatever we may need to do to serve all four of our counties.”

CCNO has committed is primary funding from federal grants and assistance, Davidson said, so having the grant will help cover unexpected costs, particularly with the recent layoffs and businesses closures.

The foundation reported it granted nearly \$2 million across the state to nonprofit organizations. Additionally, the foundation began

the Small Business Stabilization Fund to lend money to nonprofit community lenders, which may help these lenders offer low and no-interest loans to local for profit and nonprofit businesses.

La GRANDE AUTO REPAIR
975-2000
www.lagrandeautorepair.com



MOST ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY AVAILABLE
ACDelcoTSS

FAMILY OWNED



NORTHWEST FURNITURE & MATTRESS

215 Elm Street La Grande (541) 963-5440

northwestfurnitureandmattress.com

 