

COMMUNITY

Meetings

• PENDLETON — The Board of Directors of the InterMountain Education Service District Budget Committee will meet Wednesday, May 27, at 5 p.m. A regular board meeting will follow at 6 p.m. Both meetings will be held at the IMESD, 2001 SW Nye Ave., Pendleton.

Briefs

Beware of COVID-related scams

LA GRANDE — The NE Oregon Joint Information Center warns the community that COVID-related scams continue to increase throughout the nation and in Oregon. Authorities caution citizens to continue to be alert. Both the Federal Trade Commission and the Federal Communications Commission have reported a spike in scams concerning the coronavirus, including fake home testing kits, fake cures and other malicious attempts to prey on COVID-19 fears.

According to the local information center, the U.S. Treasury Department will not ask you to pay anything for the CARES Act funding most citizens will receive, and will not contact you for your bank account information.

If someone contacts you and claims to be from the government and asks for this type of information, report them to [www.ftc.gov/](http://www.ftc.gov/) complaint. Learn more at [www.ftc.gov/coronavirus/scams-consumer-advice](http://www.ftc.gov/coronavirus/scams-consumer-advice).

Minam Curve work begins Tuesday

MINAM — Work begins Tuesday at 6 a.m. for switching traffic from the existing curve to the new curve near Minam on Highway 82.

The Oregon Department of Transportation reported crews will work double shifts for at least two days to make the connections at each end of the new alignment.

Travelers can expect up to 20 minute delays. The contractors aim to complete this by Friday.

# Safe Communities: The power of building developmental assets

In these unprecedented COVID-19 times, do out-of-school (and out-of-the-house) programs such as the arts, sports, parks and recreation camps



STU SPENCE  
LA GRANDE PARKS & REC

and classes and events help reduce youth use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs? Not only do they, but research shows when we build developmental assets in youth, they are least likely to have problems with alcohol, illicit drugs, violence and sexual activity.

What's a developmental asset? These are research-based tools we can use to support youth as they grow up to make healthy deci-

sions. These assets aim to protect youth from high-risk behaviors and help them become healthy, productive and responsible adults. Some examples include positive adult relationships, family support and caring neighborhoods and schools.

Out-of-school programs are some of the strongest asset builders in youth. Sports, for example, provide a support system of positive peer and adult relationships through team-building activities on and off the field. The relationships that grow from being part of a team give youth lifelong tools to succeed. Through the arts and other camps, classes and events, youth can build important assets. Children with sim-

ilar interests learning skills together naturally builds positive relationships among peers.

While these types of programs help build developmental assets, families and influential adults continue to play the most important roles in determining how youth handle the lure of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. That's why, as a parent, it's so important to talk to your children about these issues and set high expectations for them not to engage in these behaviors. It's why at the La Grande Parks & Recreation Department we strive to train all staff to build positive relationships with our youth participants, whether it be through youth sports, the arts or summer camp.

When I was fresh out of

college, I had the opportunity to co-coordinate a summer camp for older elementary school and early middle school youth. It was stressed to us as staff members to build a relationship with the children every day, to take an interest in their life every day. We instilled a sense of belonging by including everyone, gave them influence in decision making by giving them ownership in planning activities, and a sense of competence by teaching them life skills. Being a positive influence involved setting a good example but also was as simple as asking about their day or how they were doing. Building these assets wasn't hard, after all — it just involved the magic of building a sincere relationship and simply taking

an interest in them. In our small town, we have the best opportunity to help these youth succeed. By caring, setting high expectations and providing opportunities for youth to participate in programs, we can all reduce youth use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

This is the very reason I joined the Union County Safe Communities Coalition when I moved here, and I would encourage you to do the same. We are working together for a safe, healthy and drug-free community.

**About the Author**  
Stu Spence is the city of La Grande Parks & Recreation director and a member of the Union County Safe Communities Coalition.

## OBITUARIES

Joseph A. Small

La Grande  
Joseph A. Small, 54, of La Grande, died May 22 at his home. Loveland Funeral Chapel & Crematory will be handling the arrangements.

Carrie Morton

La Grande  
Carrie Morton, 31, of La Grande, died May 24 at Grande Ronde Hospital. Loveland Funeral Chapel & Crematory will be handling the arrangements.

Anto Jally

La Grande  
Anto Jally, 70, of La Grande, died May 21 at his residence. Loveland Funeral Chapel & Crematory will be handling the arrangements.

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

Miriam Hill

La Grande  
Miriam Hill, 99, of La Grande, died May 23 at a local care facility. Loveland Funeral Chapel & Crematory will be handling the arrangements.

## PUBLIC SAFETY REPORT

FRIDAY

6:16 a.m. — La Grande police responded to a noise complaint at Washington Avenue and Fir Street. The construction team there agreed to quiet down.

7:44 a.m. — La Grande police responded to a report about vandalism on the 2100 block of First Street.

2:15 p.m. — A caller reported a burglary at a residence on the 1900 block of Alder Street, La Grande.

3:19 p.m. — La Grande police responded to the 2900 block of Fourth Street and took a report for vandalism to a vehicle.

7:22 p.m. — The Union County Sheriff's Office responded to a request for a welfare check on a person in Union who may be suffering from a mental crisis. The person was OK.

SATURDAY

12:36 a.m. — Callers reported a loud party on the 1400 block of Ninth Street, La

Grande. Police responded and the subjects agreed to keep down the volume.

11:25 a.m. — A caller reported a live cow floating down the river along Highway 244 near La Grande.

3:13 p.m. — A La Grande resident reported receiving harassing phone calls. Police took information.

9:07 p.m. — A Union County sheriff's deputy responded to the 62200 block of Dove Road, La Grande, on a report of a domestic disturbance and separated the parties involved.

10:13 p.m. — La Grande police responded to a complaint about a loud party on the 1800 block of 26th Street. The partygoers said they would keep down the noise.

11:01 p.m. — Another complaint about a loud party came in from the 800 block of Brooks Road, Imbler. Union County sheriff's deputies responded, and the owners said they would keep down the noise.

11:40 p.m. — La Grande

police responded to the 1200 block of Hall Street on a report of an assault. Officers separated the parties.

SUNDAY

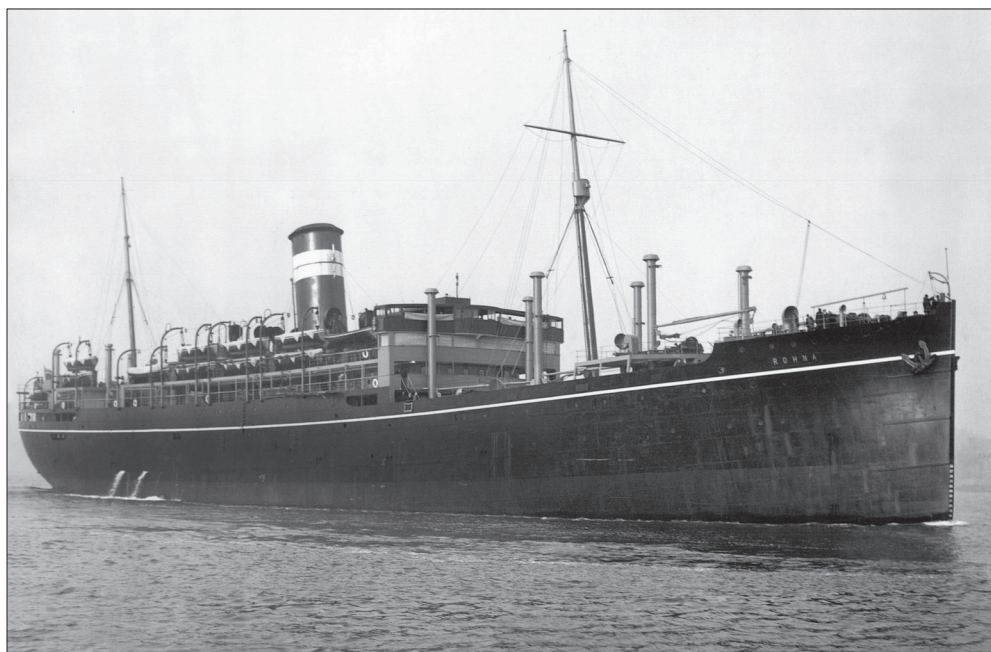
9:06 a.m. — A Union County sheriff's deputy responded to the Flying J Travel Plaza, 63276 Highway 203, La Grande, on a report of a dissatisfied customer who refused to leave.

10:38 a.m. — The U.S. Forest Service arrested Anthony Charles Heise, 49, of Summerville, on accusations of driving under the influence of intoxicants.

3:43 p.m. — A caller reported the railroad arms were malfunctioning at Greenwood Street, La Grande.

5:30 p.m. — A caller reported finding a gun at Walmart, 11619 Island Ave., Island City. A Union County sheriff's deputy returned the gun to its owner.

7:36 p.m. — La Grande police responded to Grande Ronde Hospital, 900 Sunset Drive, for a dog bite victim and took a report.



Submitted photo

The HMT Rohna, a British transport ship carrying American troops, was hit by a German missile off the coast of North Africa on Nov. 26, 1943. The attack killed 1,138 troops, including 1,015 from the U.S.

## SEARCH

Continued from Page 2A

B. Perkins of Multnomah County.

Their parents were never told what happened, Ballo said. The attack was classified so the Germans wouldn't know how successful it was, but the censorship was painful for the families, he said.

The Oregon soldiers and other troops sent Christmas cards home before they boarded the ship. All the families received the cards and assumed everything was fine, but by that time many of the troops were already dead, Ballo said.

"One of the driving forces of making this film is understanding what these families went through," he said.

Two months after the attack, families started to receive telegrams that said their sons were missing in action. Five months later, they received reports that their sons were presumed dead. No other details were given, other than they died in a ship sunk in combat, Ballo said.

"Just imagine your son



Submitted photo

A memorial that honors those killed in the HMT Rohna attack is on display at the Fort Mitchell National Cemetery in Seale, Alabama. The incident remained classified for years.

goes to war and you get a card in the mail telling you he died," Ballo said. "No body. No funeral. No closure."

It wasn't until 50 years later that details of the attack became widely known.

A group of survivors met for a reunion in 1993 and that resulted in more public attention. The survivors then created a memorial and spoke more openly about their experience.

"Survivors didn't tell their families," Ballo said. "That's why the story never really got any traction. It

took 50 years before these survivors got together again, and that's when they started talking."

Still, the attack is a little-known piece of World War II history Ballo is seeking to highlight in his film.

"It was a long time ago," Ballo said. "That's why I consider this film a last chance to tell this story."

## Two-faced kitten surprises Albany family

■ Janus cat lived short life with caring family

By Nia Tariq  
Corvallis Gazette-Times via AP StoryShare

ALBANY — A two-faced cat was born Wednesday morning on a farm east of Albany. Not that the kitten is cunning and deceitful. It literally has two faces on one head. "We didn't know it was anything that cool at first," said Kyla King, who looks after the barn cats that frequent her property.

A 1-year-old cat started giving birth around 5 a.m. Wednesday in a makeshift kennel in King's backyard. King periodically checked on the mother, seeing four newborns around 7 a.m., then five, and finally six little ones appearing. But the last one confused her.

The gray, tabby-coated kitten had two mouths, two noses and four eyes atop one head.

King's husband, BJ, broke the interesting news



AP StoryShare

A two-faced kitten born last week near Albany. Abnormal protein activity causes the deformity.

to Facebook that afternoon. His photos and videos showed the kitty eating from both mouths and breathing from both noses.

The birth defect the kitten is believed to have is called diprosopus, or craniofacial duplication. It's very rare, according to Oregon State University veterinarian Jennifer Warnock. Cats with this condition are often referred to as Janus cats, named for a Roman god with two faces.

The disorder is believed to be caused by an overactive developmental protein known as sonic hedgehog (or SHH), named after the popular video game character. The gene responsible for SHH controls the width and placement of facial features. Too much SHH can result in duplicate or larger-than-usual features.

Many Janus cats don't live past a few days, and The Oregonian reported that the kitten died Saturday night.

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