

COMMUNITY

Meetings

• **BAKER CITY** — The Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative Board of Directors will meet Tuesday, June 23. Among other agenda items, the board is scheduled to discuss COVID-19 updates and the 2021 annual meeting. OTEC is headquartered at 4005 23rd St., Baker City. For more information, contact Michele Grove, OTEC administrative assistant, at 541-524-2853 or mgrove@otec.com.

Briefs

Virtual meeting discusses efforts to expand passenger rail service

LA GRANDE — The public is invited to attend a virtual meeting of the Association of Oregon Transit Advocates on Monday, June 22, at 10:30 a.m. to discuss restoring rail passenger service to Eastern Oregon and beyond. An in-person meeting was held in La Grande last fall.

Next week's one-hour AORTA meeting will cover local, state and regional efforts to expand passenger rail, including creation of a multi-state transportation authority.

This was outlined in a Transportation For America Zoom meeting last month; this has already been used to move forward on expanding rail in the Gulf Coast and Upper Midwestern states.

There are also renewed efforts in Montana and Washington state to add service.

To join the Zoom meeting online, use meeting ID 895 5080 8988 and password 0XTuy1.

The direct link is <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89550808988?pwd=T2J6Y1J5T3ZlMwVt4SUxVWVtQ2dH-Yldz09>. To call in, dial +1 669 900 9128 and use Meeting ID 895 5080 8988 and password 352752.

For more information, email Jon Nuxoll, past AORTA president, at jonnuxoll@usa.net.

Elgin Museum postpones opening

ELGIN — Due to the recent outbreak of COVID-19 in Union County, the opening of the Elgin Museum has been postponed until further notice.

The museum and its new Elgin jail exhibit had planned to reopen this week.

WEDNESDAY

10:47 a.m. — A resident on the 600 block of Y Avenue, La Grande, asked to speak to an officer about the numerous cats in the neighborhood.

12:49 p.m. — La Grande police received a report from a resident about a fraudulent online account.

1:34 p.m. — The Union County Sheriff's Office received a report of a possible sex crime in Elgin.

2:16 p.m. — A La Grande resident reported receiving harassing phone calls.

3:25 p.m. — A La Grande resident complained to police

about receiving scam calls.

4:25 p.m. — Another La Grande resident reported receiving harassing phone calls.

4:43 p.m. — La Grande police responded to the 200 block of Elm Street on a call about vandalism.

THURSDAY

8:51 a.m. — Oregon State Police cited Shawn Lyle Haynes, 45, no fixed address, in La Grande, on a Union County warrant for three counts of telephonic harassment.

10:01 a.m. — A La Grande resident asked to speak to

an officer about a scam. An officer explained options.

1:15 p.m. — La Grande police received a complaint about possible animal neglect at Walnut Street and O Avenue.

1:20 p.m. — An Elgin resident at South 15th Avenue and Birch Street reported the theft of a package. A Union County sheriff's deputy responded and took a report.

7:55 p.m. — La Grande police responded to a report of theft on the 1500 block of Adams Avenue. Officers subsequently arrested Benjamin Eduard Helmenstein, 23, of Beaverton, on accusations

of first-degree trespass, third-degree theft, resisting arrest, disorderly conduct and three counts of assaulting an officer.

9:32 p.m. — La Grande police responded to the 1700 block of V Avenue for a disturbance. The parties involved were in a verbal dispute and resolved the situation.

9:51 p.m. — La Grande police in the span of about an hour received several complaints about fireworks, including at Greenwood Street and U Avenue and on the 2900 block of Depot Street. Police did not find who set off the fireworks.

OBITUARIES

Cynthia Williams-Spier

North Powder

Cynthia Williams-Spier, 63, of North Powder, died June 12 at her residence. Arrangements are by Loveland Funeral Chapel & Crematory.

Eunice E. Skillings

Wallowa

Eunice Elma Skillings, 71, of Wallowa, died Jan. 7 at Wallowa Memorial Hospital in Enterprise. A funeral service will be held June 27 at 11 a.m. at Bramlett Cemetery, near Wallowa. A potluck will begin at 1 p.m. at the Wallowa Lions Park.

Charles 'Leroy' Poe

Island City

The June 25 celebration of life for Charles "Leroy" Poe has been postponed. Leroy, 73, of Island City, died May 28 at his residence. Arrangements are by Loveland Funeral Chapel.

Upcoming local services



June 20 — EVA BENNETT:

2 p.m. private interment; viewable online at <https://anything-2digital.com/loveland-funerals>.

June 20 — VICTORIA COX:

6 p.m. private celebration of life; viewable online at <https://anything2digital.com/loveland-funerals>.

June 22 — JOANNE CROTEAU: 10 a.m. service; Island City Cemetery.

June 27 — EUNICE SKILLINGS: 11 a.m. funeral, Bramlett Cemetery, Wallowa; 1 p.m. potluck, Wallowa Lions Park.

— *Calendar courtesy of Loveland Funeral Chapel, La Grande*

Trice scholarship golf match rescheduled

The Observer

UNION — The first Battle at the Peak fundraising golf match to support the Doug Leon Trice Memorial Scholarship has been postponed to July 11 due to the recent COVID-19 out-

break in Union County, according to posts on both the Buffalo Peak Golf Course and Johnny Ballgame Show Facebook pages.

The tentatively rescheduled event still will take place at 10 a.m.

Wallowa cancels July 4 parade

EO Media Group

WALLOWA — There will be no Independence Day parade in Wallowa this year, after the Wallowa City Council met Tuesday and voted to deny any permits for the event.

"Let's just cancel it this year and then have an extra big parade next year," Mayor Gary Hulse said.

The move came on the heels of a major outbreak of COVID-19 in nearby Union County where many parade-goers could come from. La Grande is 46 miles — less than an hour's drive — from Wallowa.

"The final nail was what's happened in Union County," Councilman Scott McCrae said.

UNION COUNTY SENIOR CENTER TAKEOUT LUNCH MENU

Pickup is 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at 1504 N. Albany St., La Grande.

For delivery, call 541-963-7532 before 10 a.m.

Age 60+, \$3 suggested donation; all others, \$5.

JUNE 22-26

Monday: meatloaf, mashed potatoes and gravy, vegetable casserole, rolls, fresh fruit.

Tuesday: Reuben sandwiches, potato salad, fruit garnish,

light dessert.

Wednesday: almond chicken, rice pilaf, broiled tomatoes, baked bread, sweet onion and cucumber salad, fresh fruit.

Thursday: croissant sandwiches, Greek salad, chips, fresh fruit garnish, zucchini-chocolate chip bar.

Friday: chicken strips, steak fries, baked beans, coleslaw, fresh fruit, cookies.

UNION COUNTY KIDS SUMMER FOOD PROGRAM GRAB & GO LUNCH MENU

Pickup is 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at Riveria Activity Center, 2609 Second St., La Grande.

Free for age 1-18; all others, \$4.

JUNE 22-26

Monday: meatballs, rice, steamed veggies, fruit, cookies.

Tuesday: ham, cheesy scal-

loped potatoes, corn on the cob, rolls, fresh fruit.

Wednesday: BBQ chicken, steak fries, cucumber slices, rolls, fresh fruit, dessert.

Thursday: turkey sandwiches, macaroni salad, chips, fruit.

Friday: chicken strips, steak fries, baked beans, coleslaw, fresh fruit, cookies.

Sidney Warren Ratzlaff

June 5, 1922 - June 16, 2020

Sidney Warren Ratzlaff was born in Highmore, South Dakota, June 5, 1922, to Isaac and Eva (Boese) Ratzlaff at their home 10 miles south of Highmore. He grew up on a farm, attended the South Eagle Township Elementary School near his home, and graduated from Highmore High School in 1940. He was the third from youngest of eighteen children.

Sidney served his country during WWII from November 1942 to Jan 1946 as a medical technician in the 80th Armored Medical Battalion, of the 10th Armored Division of Patton's 3rd Army. His unit served in France and Germany in WWII; notably he was a medic during the Battle of the Bulge and was awarded a Bronze Star during that time, for "exceptional performance of duty as a Dental Technician during the period 1 November 1944 to 7 May 1945 in connection with military operations against an enemy of the United States in the European Theater of Operations." Throughout his time overseas he wrote to and fell in love with a wartime pen-pal named Billee Townsend of Ocean City, New Jersey, and after being honorably discharged, they got married on June 12, 1946. To this union six children were born during the family's residing in New Jersey, South Dakota, and Oregon. Sid spent almost 67 years with Billee as his wife and best friend until her death in 2013.

While on the east coast, Sidney and Billee had children Stephen and Daniel. He worked odd jobs while attending the University of Delaware and the Kings College in Delaware and earned his Bachelor of Arts in Teaching from Kings College in 1951. He earned a Master of Arts in Education from the University of South Dakota in 1955.

The family moved to South Dakota in 1951 where Sidney got his first teaching job in a one room school house in Hyde County and then spent two years teaching at Ree Heights. The family then moved to Klamath Falls, Oregon in 1954, where Sidney first started teaching in Fairhaven before becoming a history and science teacher at Altamont Jr. High School. He liked to tell the story of a girl at Fairhaven with a glass eye who'd take it out and roll it down the aisle to create a disturbance. David, Mark, Dona, and Carol were all born in the ten years spent in Klamath Falls.

Sidney then got a superintendent position in the Crane School District in Oregon, and was also principal and history teacher at Crane High School. He wit-

nessed the burning down of the Crane High School in 1967 and the subsequent rebuild.

Sidney took another administrative position in the Elgin, Oregon school district in 1969, and they built their own home there outside of town in 1970. In 1974 Sidney took another administrative position at Umapine School District, retiring in 1980 back to the Elgin home.

Sid and Billee maintained their beautiful home and 30 acres of property, where his kids and grandkids loved to visit. He made his famous apple cider and apple sauce annually, ran daily for exercise up the hill, and tinkered around the property, maintaining fences, the well, cutting firewood, etc. In October 2010 he moved to youngest daughter Carol's home in Boise, Idaho to be with Billee who was already convalescing there.

The most important thing in Sidney's life was his relationship with Jesus Christ as his Savior. He was saved on January 4, 1939 through a visiting evangelist and brought that faith with him throughout the war and his life. His faith was one of the aspects that particularly appealed to Billee when they were just pen-pals, and together he and Billee brought their children up in Christ. He loved God, his wife and his kids and was involved in any church he was a member of, at times a Sunday School teacher or church deacon, and always a dedicated follower of Jesus Christ.

Sidney passed on June 16, 2020 in Boise, Idaho at the age of 98. Sidney was preceded in death by his wife, Billee, and is survived by four sons, Stephen of Tucson, Arizona, Daniel (Jeanette) of Tucson, Arizona, David of Elgin, Oregon, Mark (Margie) of Eugene, Oregon, and two daughters, Dona (Gregor) of Elgin, Oregon, and Carol (Robert) of Boise, Idaho. He also has seven grandchildren--Laura, Emily, Ben (Erica), Aimee (Tommy), Kristina (Joseph), Rachel (Steven), and Mark, and five great-grandchildren--Isaac, Ava, Eliana, Kaison, and Maggie.

He was also preceded in death by his parents, his brothers Leroy, Gilbert, Alvin, Leslie, Arnold, Orville, and Willis; and sisters Clara, Esther, Rosa, Ida, Virginia, Florence, Mary and Ruby.



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Greg Smith,
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541-962-1532 or email eousbdc@gmail.com

Here's what Rob and Heidi Denton, owners of Western Steel, LLC in La Grande have to say about EOU SBDC:

"I have been telling everyone I know about what a valuable resource EOU SBDC is. There are not enough positive words to express our gratitude for all of the insight provided to us. Every member of the staff has gone over and beyond to assist us in finding resources. We are so thankful to have them in our community."

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Ralphie Messersmith



An uncommon House Sparrow

Ralphie was born on July 4th, 2010 in Island City, OR in a home that was destroyed and all of her siblings lost. She was rescued and raised by Jan and Stephanie Messersmith of Cove. In her younger days, Ralphie enjoyed traveling by motorcycle with her Mom and Dad all over the western U.S. She was highly intelligent and had an amazing effect on all who knew her. She was playful and was always up for a game of cribbage with Dad and loved to steal the pegs and fly off with them.

She loved to bird-watch from several of the windows in our home, but had no desire to go outside. She was affectionate and spent many hours cuddling with Mom and Dad. As her God-Mother, Sandra Coulson, often remarked, "it is an honor and privilege to know Ralphie."

We would like to thank everyone who was part of "team Ralphie" and helped us in so many ways. Ralphie passed on June 2, 2020 almost 10 years old!

♥ We will always love you Ralphie!