

DAILY
PLANNER

TODAY

Today is Saturday, July 11, the 193rd day of 2020. There are 173 days left in the year.

TODAY'S HIGHLIGHT

On July 11, 1804, Vice President Aaron Burr mortally wounded former Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton during a pistol duel in Weehawken, New Jersey. (Hamilton died the next day.)

ON THIS DATE

In 1533, Pope Clement VII issued a bull of excommunication against England's King Henry VIII for the annulment of the king's marriage to Catherine of Aragon and subsequent marriage to second wife Anne Boleyn.

In 1798, the U.S. Marine Corps was formally re-established by a congressional act that also created the U.S. Marine Band.

In 1859, Big Ben, the great bell inside the famous London clock tower, chimed for the first time.

In 1915, the Chicago Sunday Tribune ran an article titled, "Blues Is Jazz and Jazz Is Blues." (It's believed to be one of the earliest, if not the earliest, uses of the word "jazz" as a musical term by a newspaper.)

In 1936, New York City's Triborough Bridge linking Manhattan, Queens and The Bronx was opened to traffic.

In 1955, the U.S. Air Force Academy swore in its first class of cadets at its temporary quarters at Lowry Air Force Base in Colorado.

In 1960, the novel "To Kill a Mockingbird" by Harper Lee was first published by J.B. Lippincott and Co.

In 1972, the World Chess Championship opened as grandmasters Bobby Fischer of the United States and defending champion Boris Spassky of the Soviet Union began play in Reykjavik, Iceland. (Fischer won after 21 games.)

In 1974, the House Judiciary Committee released volumes of evidence it had gathered in its Watergate inquiry.

In 1979, the abandoned U.S. space station Skylab made a spectacular return to Earth, burning up in the atmosphere and showering debris over the Indian Ocean and Australia.

LOTTERY

Megabucks: \$3.7 million 27-32-36-37-38-45

Mega Millions: \$73 million 16-20-25-30-43-18 x3

Powerball: \$69 million 3-10-34-36-62-PB-5 x10

Win for Life: July 8 14-25-33-71

Pick 4: July 9

• 1 p.m.: 6-2-4-9; • 4 p.m.: 6-1-4-4

• 7 p.m.: 2-0-3-2; • 10 p.m.: 9-8-2-9

Pick 4: July 8

• 1 p.m.: 2-4-3-5; • 4 p.m.: 0-5-4-1

• 7 p.m.: 5-7-4-8; • 10 p.m.: 1-2-1-2

DELIVERY ISSUES?

If you have any problems receiving your Observer, call the office at 541-963-3161.

Man convicted of sex crimes out on appeal

The Observer

LA GRANDE — Michael Jacob Altherr of La Grande faced 18 years in prison for sexual abuse but is now free on appeal and waiting for a retrial.

The state accused Altherr of abusing a girl younger than 14 years old on multiple occasions from 2013-16. At the start of the abuse, the girl was 11

and living under the same roof as Altherr, court documents stated. She revealed the abuse in 2017. A Union County jury in July 2018 convicted Altherr of three counts each of third-degree sexual abuse and first-degree sexual abuse.

Circuit Judge Thomas Powers sentenced Altherr, now 35, to 18 years in prison.

This May, however, the Oregon Court of Appeals reversed the verdict and sent the case back to Union County.

According to court documents, the reversal was due to a change in case law.

Powers did not allow expert testimony from two of the defendant's witnesses, and Union County District Attorney Kelsie McDaniel said while Altherr was in the process

of appealing his conviction, case law that allows for the expert testimony was changed, thus the higher court granted the appeal.

McDaniel said the change also provided Altherr with conditional release from Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution, the state's medium-security prison in Pendleton, and his mother posted his \$5,000 bail

shortly after.

Since getting out, Altherr has fired two attorneys while awaiting his retrial, court records show.

Jacklyn Jenkins, special deputy district attorney for Umatilla County, is handling the prosecution.

Jenkins has extensive courtroom experience and has handled some of the most significant criminal cases in recent years in Umatilla County.



Altherr

Minam curve construction complete



Photo by Ellen Morris Bishop/EO Media Group

The Oregon Department of Transportation finished construction of the Minam curve on Oregon Highway 82. "There is some miscellaneous clean-up left to do," according to Mike Remily, ODOT's resident engineer in La Grande, "but the project is complete."

Rated as a 45 mph curve, it is intended to be safer than the previous hairpin curve above the Minam River, which was implicated in multiple crashes and deaths. The construction of the new embankment completely filled in the old highway and curve.

No sign of missing teen in Baker County

By Chris Collins
EO Media Group

RICHLAND — Baker County Sheriff's Office marine deputies were continuing to patrol the waters of Brownlee Reservoir on Friday but with no success in finding a teenage boy from the Portland area who's been missing since July 3.

The deputies are focusing on areas of the reservoir around Holcomb and Hewitt parks 3 miles east of Richland just off Highway 86, said Ashley McClay, sheriff's office spokesperson.

"There have been no sightings at this point," McClay said Friday afternoon.

Thierno Bah, 17, had been camping at Hewitt Park where his foster family and friends were vacationing, when he disappeared, McClay said.

The foster family, with whom Bah had been living for a few months, told searchers he had taken a walk about 5:30 p.m. on July 3. The family reported the boy missing about 9 p.m. Friday when he failed to return to camp.

It was not unusual for Bah, originally from the West African country of Guinea, to take long walks, his family said.

They are offering a cash reward to anyone with credible information leading to his whereabouts. To make a report, call Sheriff Travis Ash at 541-523-6415.

Ash also has been in the Richland and Halfway areas checking out reports of possible sightings, none of which has panned out, McClay said.

"We appreciate those tips coming in," she said.

Chris Galiszewski, Baker County Sheriff's



Thierno Bah

LG School District lunch prices likely to change in 2020-21

By Dick Mason
The Observer

LA GRANDE — The cost of lunches in the La Grande School District likely will change in 2020-21.

The La Grande School Board heard a proposal Wednesday to boost the price of lunches for elementary school students by 10 cents to \$2.75, middle school students by 10 cents to \$2.90 and high school students by five cents to \$3.

Chris Panike, the La Grande School District's business manager, said the increases are needed to allow the district to conform to the federal 2010 Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act. The law requires schools charge meal prices that are within 40 cents of the full reimbursement rate the federal government pays.

Panike said school districts that charge less than the reimbursement rate must regularly increase their prices. The proposal would boost the average price of La Grande school lunches to \$2.85.

The school board will vote on the lunch price increases in August. No school board members voiced opposition to the plan during the meeting Wednesday.

Panike also told the

school board the district might have the opportunity to provide free lunches to all students in kindergarten through eighth grade in 2020-21. The reason is that 41.5% of its K-8 students are in the Community Eligibility Provision. CEP students qualify for help from at least one government assistance program outside what school districts provide.

The La Grande School District is set to qualify for 67% reimbursement from the federal government for meals for its K-8 students because 40% are in the CEP category. Panike said a reimbursement rate of 67% would not be high enough for the La Grande School District to afford to provide free K-8 lunches.

However, it would be able to do this if the state provides a least \$40 million in funding to its Fueling Students for Success nutrition program in the next special legislative session, which could come this month.

Such a step would mean the La Grande School District likely would receive enough funding to boost the total federal and state reimbursement the district would get for K-8 students to 90%.

Shooting leads to arrest of woman, five juveniles

The Observer

LA GRANDE — The Union County Sheriff's Office reported arresting a woman and five juveniles Thursday after a shooting.

The sheriff's office a few minutes after 5 p.m. Thursday received a report of a light green vehicle with juveniles inside shooting in the 68200 block of Booth Lane, Cove.

A witness to the shooting began following the vehicle, which reached high speeds, according to a press release from the sheriff's office, which identified the driver as Kari Ann Joseph, 38, of La Grande.

The sheriff's office reported she dropped off five juveniles with the firearm at or near Riverside Park, La Grande.

Sheriff's Sgt. Ralph Graf-funder spotted two of the juveniles near the park's walking path bridge. They fled. Law enforcement caught them on the walking path, but the pair did not have a firearm.

The sheriff's office reported bringing out its police dog, Molly, to search for the gun. It took the dog about 6 minutes to find a .22 caliber revolver handgun in tall grass under the footbridge.

The sheriff's office arrested Joseph and the five juveniles. Joseph is in the county jail, La Grande, on three counts of criminal conspiracy.

The investigation is ongoing, the sheriff's office reported, and also involved the La Grande Police Department and Oregon State Police.

Suspect arrested for murder, arson in 2018 deaths

EO Media Group

JOHN DAY — Almost two years after a fire destroyed a home east of Mount Vernon, a suspect has been arrested on two counts of first-degree murder and arson.

Isaac Connery, 23, was arrested in Bernalillo County, New Mexico, June 26, according to a Wednesday press release from the Grant County sheriff and district attorney.

Connery is accused of shooting Terry and Sharon Smith on July 17, 2018, and setting fire to their home on Nans Rock Road in the Laycock Creek area between Mount Vernon and John Day, according to the release.

"The Grant County Sheriff's Office has worked for the past two years in solving this crime where we have taken the lead in this case, and our due diligence and hard work never ceased," Sheriff Glenn Palmer said in the release. "With what we have in a case like this, and as traumatic (as) it has been for the families of Terry and Sharon Smith, hopefully this will be a step toward understanding what took

place the night of July 17, 2018."

The fire totally destroyed the home, but Palmer later discovered partial human remains at the site, which DNA testing identified as belonging to Terry Smith, the release stated.

Palmer also discovered other partial remains that could not be identified but have been accepted as belonging to Sharon Smith, according to the release.

Evidence was found, including witness testimony and suspect cellphone locations, that place Connery and his mother, Gabrielle Connery, 46, at the Smith home at the time of the fire, according to the press release. The Connerys had been associated with

the Smiths, both in Hawaii and Oregon, prior to the incident.

The Smiths' pickup was later discovered abandoned in the Boise, Idaho, area after the fire, and follow-up interviews with witnesses indicated Isaac Connery took the pickup the night of the fire, the release states. He was indicted June 23 for unlawful use of a motor vehicle, and a nationwide warrant was issued for his arrest.

Grant County Under-sheriff Zach Mobley and Sgt. Danny Komning, along with FBI Special Agent Ben Jones, traveled to Albuquerque, New Mexico, to interview Isaac Connery.

Mobley learned he and his mother had dropped off

two Connery minor children at a local campground, likely Clyde Holliday State Park, on the afternoon or evening of July 17, 2018, and then Gabrielle Connery drove Isaac Connery to the Smith home and dropped him off, before returning alone to the campground to pick up the children, according to the release.

"Isaac Connery went to the Smith home and shot Terry, then Sharon Smith, and set fire to their home," the sheriff and district attorney reported. "Then Isaac Connery took their pickup and drove to meet Gabrielle Connery" in the Boise area.

The process to extradite Isaac Connery to Grant County has begun.

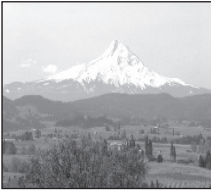
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