

OBITUARIES

Dorsa D. (Zigler) Mutch

1944-2020 • Formerly of La Grande
Dorsa Diane Mutch, 76, formerly of La Grande, died Aug. 2, 1944, in Vancouver, Washington, to Charles Arthur and Pauline Opal (Vess) Zigler. She was raised in La Grande with her older sister, Laurel, and younger sister, Anita, and attended La Grande High School.



As a young adult Dorsa moved to the Portland area where she worked a few modest jobs such as at an abattoir, a canery and a line job at Sawyer's (View-Master), before attending beauty school in 1966 and discovering her lifelong love of hairdressing, which she performed until retiring, except for the year sabbatical she took to volunteer for the Special Olympics in 1977. In the late 1980s she took a few construction classes at Portland Community College, then she and a girlfriend took off rebuilding houses. In the 1990s she worked for Tri-Met Bus as a part-time bus driver.

In 1972 Dorsa moved to Aloha, where she raised her family and built her life. She loved to garden

and always had the prettiest yard in the neighborhood. She also enjoyed videotaping her grandchildren, which usually ended with long narrated trips through her flower beds. She was extremely crafty and always decorating her beautiful home. She loved Christmas and was in her element when decorating for the holidays. Her Christmas trees were stunning and not a single branch ever went without at least one ornament. She had a great fondness for kitties (cats) and her babies (great-grandchildren), and she'd beam pure joy whenever she spoke of them. She enjoyed oldies music, singing out loud and attending Concerts in the Park with her La Grande Alumni Ladies group.

Dorsa adored her family, cherished her friends, enjoyed people, and loved giving gifts. She was the queen of "garage sale finds" and bedazzling, and her family and friends were often the recipients of such finds and bedazzlements.

Dorsa had a memory that wouldn't quit and she delighted in real trips down memory lane. She was a strong, determined lady and a force to be reckoned with, which often led to herself fixing anything that needed fixing. She

was so strong that she tirelessly fought a battle with cancer for 16 years. She didn't lose the battle of cancer, but bravely won the battle of freedom.

Dorsa was sister to Laurel and Anita and her husband, Glenn; mother to Brent and Cristy and her husband, John; stepmother to Brad and his wife, Lynnette; and grandma to three granddaughters, two grandsons and five great-grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her mother and father.

Terrence R. Huffman

Imbler
Terrence R. Huffman, 81, of Imbler, died April 6 at Grande Ronde Hospital. A graveside service will be held Oct. 24 at 2 p.m. at the Summerville Cemetery, followed by a potluck. Casual dress is preferred by the family. Those who attend must wear a mask and practice social distancing to meet COVID-19 guidelines. Arrangements are by Loveland Funeral Chapel & Crematory.

Mary Brown

La Grande
Mary Brown, 92, of La Grande, died Oct. 7 at a local care facility. Arrangements are by

Daniels-Knopp Funeral, Cremation & Life Celebration Center.

Patrick Gekeler

1951-2020 • La Grande
Patrick Gekeler, 68, of La Grande, died Aug. 4 at his home. A memorial gathering will be held Oct. 22 from 6-8 p.m. at the La Grande Gun Club. Those who attend are reminded to wear a mask and practice social distancing.



Patrick, also known as Pat, was born Aug. 18, 1951, in La Grande, to Wendall and Doris Gekeler. Pat was well known in the community for his consistent attendance and support of the La Grande Gun Club and Eastern Oregon University Trapshoot Club. He taught several family members to shoot their first gun and passed along his love and joy of the sport to those who surrounded him, whether they were friend or family.

Pat was an incredible brother, uncle and great-uncle. He never missed a sports game or a birthday party. His great-nieces loved to crawl into his lap and play with his beard and fondly

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Please follow guidelines regarding face coverings and social distancing at all services.
Oct. 22 — PATRICK GEKELER: 6-8 p.m. memorial gathering, La Grande Gun Club.
Oct. 24 — TERENCE HUFFMAN: 2 p.m. graveside service, Summerville Cemetery (casual dress preferred); potluck follows.
— Calendar courtesy of Loveland Funeral Chapel, La Grande

called him Papa Pat. He was an animal lover and a friend to many — his kind heart, soft-spoken demeanor and easy calming presence soothed his family and friends and will be sorely missed.

Surviving relatives include his brothers, Gary Gekeler and Bruce Gekeler; nephews, Kiel Gekeler, Neal Gekeler, Sam Gekeler and Lane Gekeler; and great-nieces and great-nephews, Genevieve Gekeler, Josephine Gekeler, Megan Gekeler and Ezra Gekeler

La Grande police set 'Drug Take Back Day'

The Observer

LA GRANDE — If the prescriptions in your medicine cabinet have expired or you have other unwanted medications, the La Grande Police Department is offering you a place to safely leave these drugs on Oct. 24 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

For a decade, the police department has participated in collaboration with the Oregon Safe Communities Coalition and the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration in "Drug Take Back Day" to prevent pill abuse and theft.



The Observer, File

The La Grande Police Department is participating in Drug Take Back Day on Oct. 24, 2020, inviting residents to drop off unwanted and expired prescription medication at the police station at 1109 K Ave.

"This initiative addresses a vital public safety and public health issue," a press release

from the La Grande Police Department said. "Medicines that languish in home cabinets are highly susceptible to diversion, misuse and abuse."

The drug collection event cannot accept liquids or needles, only pills or patches. And the event requires anyone dropping off drugs to wear face masks due to COVID-19.

La Grande police in 2019 collected a combined 283 pounds of prescription drugs for disposal. There also is a 24/7 drop box in the lobby of the police station at 1109 K Ave., La Grande.

Assistance available to help people with Medicare enrollment

The Observer

UNION COUNTY — Medicare and Part D prescription drug plan open enrollment begins Thursday, Oct. 15, and runs to Dec. 7. The Northeast Oregon Network and Grande Ronde Hospital both offer assistance in connecting people who are eligible for Medicare with those who can guide them through the enrollment process.

"In normal times, Medicare is a complex program," said Chiqui Flowers, Oregon Health Insurance Marketplace and Senior Health Insurance Benefits Assistance program administrator. "During the COVID-19 pandemic, open enrollment will be harder to navigate, but we are available to serve beneficiaries

and we'll get through this hard time together."

According to Northeast Oregon Network's outreach programs coordinator Holly Sorensen, "NEON is able to assist with Oregon Health Plan and the Health Insurance Marketplace application processes, but when consumers eligible for Medicare request assistance we do our best to provide a warm hand-off to local insurance agents with expertise in Medicare and we also provide the phone number for SHIBA and information about how they can help."

For more information about the Senior Health Insurance Benefits Assistance program visit www.SHIBA.Oregon.gov or call the SHIBA central office at 1-800-722-4134.

EOU cancels trick-or-treat for residence halls

The Observer

LA GRANDE — La Grande youths this year will have to go without trick-or-treating at residence halls at Eastern Oregon University.

EOU in a press release Monday, Oct. 12, announced it is closing the residence halls on Halloween night, a move to keep the community safe due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Many university events integrate students with local life," the press release stated. "However, this means when problems arise, like a pandemic, it is important to prioritize community health."

Residence Life director Jeremy Jones

said in the announcement there was no viable way to host the event in a safe manner. He said he understands there may be some disappointment among community members as well as college students and hopes to resume the trick-or-treating next year.

"I always want to take the opportunity to thank our community and to thank our students for their sacrifice and continued commitment to the safety and the well-being of our students and our community," he said in the press release.

Jones also said it is important for everyone to assess their Halloween activities for risk and find creative, safe ways to celebrate.



EOU/Contributed Photo

Eastern Oregon University will not allow community members to trick-or-treat at residence halls this Halloween due to the pandemic.

PUBLIC SAFETY REPORT

MONDAY, OCT. 12

6:12 a.m. — A caller reported the theft of a chainsaw from a vehicle on the 1000 block of Alder Street, Elgin. A Union County sheriff's deputy took a report.

8:15 a.m. — The Union County Sheriff's Office received a complaint about an intoxicated person walking in and out of traffic at Buchanan Lane and McAlister Road, La Grande. A deputy gave the person a ride.

11:51 a.m. — La Grande police and fire responded to the Moon Motel, 2116 Adams Ave., for a fire. First responders arrived and found Motel Manager Pramesh Sam Lal, 57, was burning a mattress in the parking lot to get rid of bed bugs. Police cited her for reckless burning.

3:33 p.m. — La Grande police received a report of a theft of a vehicle from the 2000 block of H Avenue. An officer took a report.

4:24 p.m. — Law enforcement responded to the 400 block of 16th Street, La Grande, for a disturbance between a man and construction workers. Officers resolved the situation.

10:50 p.m. — A caller on the 2400 block of Q Avenue, La Grande, reported a male messed with residential property, threatened the property owner and then left. La Grande police responded and took down information.

TUESDAY, OCT. 13

11:42 a.m. — La Grande police responded to a residential burglary alarm on the

600 block of Y Avenue and arrested a 49-year-old man on a Polk County warrant for violating parole. La Grande police booked Alvin David Surratt, 49, into the Union County Correctional Facility, La Grande, for violating parole and felony possession of methamphetamine.

4:22 p.m. — A caller reported the theft of an air compressor from the 73500 block of Gordon Creek Road, Elgin. A Union County sheriff's deputy contacted the caller and took down information.

4:30 p.m. — A semitrailer crashed on Interstate 84 near exit 265 for La Grande, blocking the westbound lanes and spilling diesel fuel on the road. The Oregon Department of Transportation shut down the westbound side all the way to Ontario until about 10 p.m.

5:06 p.m. — A caller on the 1900 block of X Avenue, La Grande, reported a male hit a motorhome and threw trash around. A Union County sheriff's deputy responded.

6:03 p.m. — An Elgin resident in the area of Merritt Lane and Highway 82 reported a neighbor threatened to shoot him and has tried to run him over. A Union County sheriff's deputy contacted the caller.

10:15 p.m. — A caller reported a person threatening self-harm in La Grande. An officer contacted the subject, who reported being fine and would seek help the next day.

Recent Oregon State Police activity

Oct. 6 — Oregon State Police on the eastbound side of Interstate 84 near milepost 264 arrested Jeffery Emmanuel Beckstrand, 48, of Goldendale, Washington, for driving under the influence of intoxicants and reckless driving.

Oct. 11 — A driver lost control of her vehicle on Interstate 84 near milepost 253 west of La Grande and ended up

in the Grande Ronde River. Oregon State Police reported an 18-year-old woman from Christmas Valley was heading east on the interstate while it was raining. She told the trooper at the scene she was going too fast in the rain and her Dodge pickup began to hydroplane. She overcorrected, and the pickup went over the barricade, off the embankment, hit a tree and came to a stop in the river.

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