

Archer made a strong local and regional impact

By Dick Mason
The Observer

LA GRANDE — A talented archer with deep La Grande roots, who used a technique many people in this region tried to emulate decades ago, recently died.

Gerald Rimbey died Dec. 3 in Reedsport after an extended illness. He was 90. Rimbey lived in Union County most of his life before moving to Reedsport.

"He was an icon (in local archery circles)," said Norm Paullus, a member of the Grande Ronde Bowmen, a La Grande-based archery club Rimbey belonged to for decades.

Rimbey won enough trophy hardware at archery tournaments to fill a small room and was at his peak in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

One of Rimbey's most successful years in archery was 1959 when he won all three divisions of the Northwest archery championships, a feat rarely accomplished in the event at the time, Paullus said.

In that same year, Rimbey traveled to Elko, Nevada, where he won the inaugural Silver Buckle Tournament, a prestigious competition open only to the top archers in the United States west of the

Rocky Mountains.

Paullus said Rimbey, using a recurve bow, could fire four arrows at a target 80 yards away and hit each within 4 inches of the bull's-eye. And Rimbey could do this consistently.

One reason for Rimbey's success is he had good technique and excellent physical control. Paullus explained Rimbey could repeat the same motion multiple times without varying it. Many archers watched Rimbey closely at shoots so they could copy him.

"People wanted to replicate his style," Paullus said. "They were always quizzing him about it."

Rimbey was highly respected in archery circles not only for his talent but his integrity.

Paullus said he would never report an inaccurate score to judges or do anything to violate the honor code archers abide by at tournaments.

Rimbey also was a good storyteller.

"He had a dry sense of humor. It was hard to tell sometimes if the story he was telling really happened," Paullus recalled.

Many of his stories were about hunting experiences.

Rimbey did all of his hunting with a bow. He



Norm Paullus/Contributed Photo

The late archer Gerald Rimbey earned a reputation in the 1950s and '60s as one of the peak archers on the West Coast. He lived most of his life in Union County and died in early December in Reedsport at the age of 90.

Search on for connection to old archery club

UNION COUNTY — The late archer Gerald Rimbey belonged to the Grande Ronde Bowmen club for decades and shared knowledge about its history, which intrigued Norm Paullus of La Grande, a longtime member of the club.

The club has had its present name since about 1945. However, Paullus said Rimbey told him its history actually dates back to 1918 when the Grande Rondes archery club was founded in La Grande. The club operated as the Grande Rondes through 1933. Many assume the club broke up then because of the Great Depression, but Rimbey, who died Dec. 3 at the age of 90, contended this was not true.

"He told me the club went dormant but did not disband," Paullus said.

This means the Grande Ronde Bowmen club could be more than 100 years old. That would put the local club 40 years short of the title for oldest archery club in the United States.

The Chicago Archery Club on its website states it was founded in 1878 and "bears the distinction of being the first chartered and oldest archery club in the United States in continuous existence."

Paullus now is looking for written verification the Grande Rondes never disbanded and is indeed today's Grande Ronde Bowmen.

often was successful as a hunter because he had an excellent ability to gauge how far away a game animal was, Paullus said. This also helped him win at tournaments in which yardage was not marked.

Rimbey worked at several jobs during his career, including with the La

Grande Fire Department and Martin's Archery in Walla Walla, Washington, for which he had made more than 2,000 bows over a two-year period.

A service will be held for Rimbey at a later date in the La Grande area. His remains will be placed in Island City Cemetery.

Vietnam vet recognized with honor quilt

Local group makes quilts for veterans

By Bill Bradshaw
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — The women of the Wallowa Mountain Quilt Guild on Thursday, Dec. 10, presented a local veteran with an honor quilt in recognition of his military service.

Terry Decker is a veteran of the Vietnam era, guild President Barbara McCormack said.

"Our mission is to give every veteran in the county, whether he served in the country or overseas, an honor quilt," she said.

The guild usually makes the presentation at a luncheon or similar get-together, McCormack said. However, this year because

of the COVID-19 pandemic, the members chose to make the presentation individually.

Making the presentation was Decker's sister, Davise McFetridge, and her daughter, Larrisa Barnhart.

"We're just now in the Vietnam era," she said.

"It took a long time to get through World War II."

The quilts were presented to veterans from the Korean War and the years between Korea and Vietnam. She noted rural counties such as Wallowa County tend to have a higher percentage of residents who are veterans.

"We plan to get every veteran in the whole county," she said.

PUBLIC SAFETY REPORT

FRIDAY, DEC. 18

10:18 a.m. — The Union County Sheriff's Office received a report of livestock on the loose on the 71000 block of Summerville Road, Summerville. The animal enforcement officer took information.

2:07 p.m. — A La Grande police officer warned three juveniles trespassing on the railroad tracks at Harrison Avenue and Cedar Street.

8:42 p.m. — La Grande police received two complaints about noise on the 900 block of Lane Avenue. Officers responded and explained options each time.

11:02 p.m. — La Grande police responded to the 1900 block of Cove Avenue on a report of a fight.

SATURDAY, DEC. 19

7:52 a.m. — La Grande

police cited and released Jason Michael Hill, 40, no fixed address, on accusations of burglary and theft based on a secret indictment.

12:42 p.m. — A caller reported a pit bull dog on the loose on the 2300 block of L Avenue, La Grande. The animal enforcement officer took the dog to a shelter.

7:08 p.m. — A caller reported a domestic disturbance on the 1600 block of Albany Street, La Grande. Law enforcement responded and determined the circumstances did not rise to the level of a mandatory arrest.

SUNDAY, DEC. 20

12:01 a.m. — A La Grande resident on the 1600 block of 21st Street asked to speak to police about fraud and telephonic harassment. An

officer explained options.

8:22 a.m. — A Cove resident reported possible harassment. A Union County sheriff's deputy explained options for a restraining order.

9:17 a.m. — La Grande police received a report of vandalism on the 100 block of Fir Street. An officer took a report.

4:04 p.m. — The Union County Sheriff's Office received a report of a person in Elgin who was attempting self-harm. A deputy responded and found the subject was OK.

9:26 p.m. — The Union County Sheriff's Office received a report of a sex crime in Elgin.

Theodore Donald Wagner

January 1942 - November 27, 2020



Theodore Donald Wagner (Ted), 78 Warden, Washington and Yuma, Arizona passed away peacefully at his home in Yuma on November 27, 2020. Ted was born January 1942 in La Grande, Oregon to Marion and Ethel Wagner and he was raised on his family's farm involved in the production of grass and vegetable seed and grain crops. Ted married Raylene Wagoner in 1962. Ted attended Eastern Oregon State College and went on to graduate from Oregon State University College of Agriculture in 1966. Ted worked for Washington State Crop Improvement Association in Pullman, Washington and went on to start his own business, Western Agriculture Research and Production and Wagner Seed Company in 1989. Ted operated his business in conjunction with his son, Tony Wagner. Ted continued to work up until his death. Ted is survived by his wife, Raylene Wagner of Warden, Washington, his son, Tony Wagner (Janeen) of Warden, Washington, his daughter, Shanda Wagner (Harvey) of Sandpoint, Idaho and grandchildren Laura and Jackson Wagner of Warden, Washington. Ted is also survived by his brother Dale Wagner and sisters Christa Meyers and Sharon Harsin. Ted was preceded in death by his parents, Marion and Ethel Wagner and brother Howard Wagner. Ted will be remembered for his quick wit, generosity, strong work ethic and love for his family and he will be missed dearly by his family and friends.

Theodore 'Ted' C. Vandenberg

1947-2020 • Elgin

Theodore "Ted" Chris Vandenberg, 73, of Elgin, died Dec. 13 at Grande Ronde Hospital. A celebration of his life will be held in the spring.

Known as Ted, he was born Jan. 21, 1947, in La Grande, to William and Ruth (Hildebrandt) Vandenberg. He graduated from La Grande High School. He married Judy Frizzell and they were married 58 years. He resided in Arizona

during the winter season and the Pacific Northwest during the summer season.

Ted was employed in the grounds maintenance department for the school district until his retirement. He loved his motorcycle, camping, fishing, exploring swap meets, rafting, rock hounding, living life and watching NASCAR.

Surviving relatives include his wife, Judy; children, Ross Vandenberg of Imbler and Ronnie Vandenberg and spouse, Jon, of Boise, Idaho; brothers, Gary McCollum of Pasco, Washington, and Tom Vandenberg and spouse, Peggie,

of Touchet, Washington; four grandchildren and six great-grandchildren; and 10 nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents, William and Ruth.

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

Emmagean M. Peterson

La Grande

Emmagean M. Peterson, 92, of La Grande, died Dec. 19 at a local care facility. Arrangements are by Loveland Funeral Chapel & Crematory, La Grande.

Lyle J. Harmon

Elgin

Lyle Jean Harmon, 73, of Elgin, died Dec. 18 at her residence. Arrangements are by Loveland Funeral Chapel & Crematory, La Grande.

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COMMUNITY

Briefs

Meals on Wheels drivers needed

LA GRANDE — Community Connection is seeking volunteers to be Meals on Wheels drivers. For more information, call Sydney Gleeson at 541-963-7532, ext. 1104.

Art center seeks local artists and makers

LA GRANDE — Art Center East, La Grande, is looking for local artists and makers to design take-home kits in order to offer the community art experiences in their home.

If you have an idea for a take-home kit and time to write up instructions and a supply list, email info@artcentereast.org with the subject heading "Art Kit Idea" and a brief summary of your kit. Artists will be paid for accepted and completed kits.

Successful kits will be those that produce a finished product (earrings, a flip book, coil pot mug, etc.) without the need for expensive equipment or supplies, or that teach a specific skill via prompts and/or demonstrational video.

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