



Dick Mason/The Observer

Bi-Mart's walk-up pharmacy is set to close Nov. 11, 2021, after 34 years in operation in La Grande.

BI-MART

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three times over, because her prescription called for two refills. This meant the total cost of her prescription had been trimmed from \$1,500 to \$150.

"She saved me \$1,350," Rekow said.

Despite such service Rekow is now switching to another local pharmacy. She has no choice as La Grande's Bi-Mart pharmacy is set to close Nov. 11, ending a 34-year run that started in November 1987 when Bi-Mart opened in La Grande. The location has had a pharmacy throughout its history.

The pharmacy is the casualty of a sale involving the Bi-Mart Corporation and Walgreens, one of the nation's largest pharmacy chains. Walgreens, as part of the purchase agreement, will buy all of Bi-Mart's pharmacies. Walgreens will operate many of Bi-Mart's already existing pharmacies, but not at some stores, including La Grande's, according to Don Leber, Bi-Mart president of marketing and advertising.

News of the upcoming closure is not making pharmacy patients like Rekow happy.

"I'm really going to miss it," she said.

Rekow hopes that her next pharmacy will make her feel as comfortable as the staff at Bi-Mart's does. Rekow has been picking up prescriptions for herself and her family for several years at Bi-Mart.

"Whenever I come in they ask, 'Who is it for this time?' I really like the familiarity," Rekow said.

Doug Elliott of La Grande, another Bi-Mart pharmacy customer, also will miss the pharmacy's personal touch.

"I don't like it," he said of the upcoming closure. "I really like the people who work there."

Walgreens will acquire pharmacy patient prescription files and related inventory of 56 Bi-Mart pharmacies located across Oregon, Idaho and Washington as part of the purchase agreement with the Bi-Mart Corporation. Leber said that because there is not a Walgreens near La Grande, any patient who wants to get their pharmaceuticals from Walgreens without leaving town will have to do so through its mail service.

The closest Walgreens to Union County are in Walla Walla, an 83-mile drive from La Grande, and Ontario, which is 116 miles away by motor vehicle.

Leber said that Bi-Mart pharmacy patients who

want to be served by a local pharmacy should contact the pharmacy and arrange to have their records sent to it.

Leber said that pharmacy techs will be able to continue working at Bi-Mart for the same wages they now receive. Bi-Mart's pharmacy assistants and pharmacists, Leber said, will be given the opportunity to be interviewed for jobs at Walgreens.

Bi-Mart, in an Oct. 17 statement to The Oregonian, said the corporation is getting out of the pharmacy business because it is becoming unfeasible to operate its pharmacies profitably within a chain of stores its size. The statement cited rising prescription medication costs, smaller insurance reimbursements and the new Oregon Corporate Activity Tax among the reasons it is getting harder to run its pharmacies profitably. The statement noted that the CAT, which took effect in 2020, is taxing the corporation not just on profits but also receipts.

"Unchanged, the cost of pharmacy operations would threaten our business throughout the Northwest. Though difficult, we know that this is the right decision for the future of Bi-Mart," the statement said.

Man faces murder, more in June 2020 Hermiston killing

East Oregonian

HERMISTON — A suspect in the slaying of a man in Hermiston in 2020 is not getting out of the Umatilla County Jail anytime soon.

Keith Michael Beridon, 26, who State Court records show having a La Grande address, is on the hook for two counts of unlawful use of a weapon, one count of felon in possession of a firearm and one of second-degree murder in the homicide of Jesus Eli Lopez, according to state court records.

Lopez's body was found June 9, 2020, in his fam-

ily's garage, according to news reports. He died from a gunshot.

Umatilla County District Attorney Dan Primus said his office extradited Beridon from California. He is in jail without bail, where he will stay for the remainder of the case.

Beridon in September had a bail hearing. Circuit Judge Jon Lieuallen found the evidence showed a strong presumption that Beridon was responsible for the homicide and would not grant him bail, so he remains in custody, Primus said.

Primus said he can't

speak to any of the facts in the case, "only the posture of the case, where it's at in the court system." Officials have yet to publicly disclose any apparent motive in the case.

Hermiston Police Chief Jason Edmiston said based on the investigation, Beridon is the lone suspect, but when detectives flew to Orange County, California, after his apprehension, possibly on an out-of-state warrant, he declined to talk.

Beridon's pretrial conference is scheduled for the afternoon of Nov. 19 at the Umatilla County Courthouse, Pendleton.

Rescue crews find man snowbound in Wallawas

By JAYSON JACOBY
Baker City Herald

Crews from Baker and Union counties rescued a Baker County man in the snowbound Wallawa Mountains north of Halfway Monday, Oct. 25, the day after he was stranded by a blizzard while packing in supplies with horses for an elk-hunting trip.

Robert Derald Borders, 67, who lives near Baker City, did not need medical treatment, Baker County Sheriff Travis Ash said in a cellphone interview Monday afternoon.

Borders, who had four horses, was able to use his satellite device, which works even when cell service is limited or nonexistent, as is the case in that remote part of the county, to send a text message to a friend late Sunday

morning, McClay said.

The friend then called the Baker County Dispatch Center around noon Sunday. The text message also included Borders' precise location, which aided rescuers, McClay said.

Around 2:30 p.m. Monday, McClay said rescuers had reached Borders, who had sent text messages to rescuers with his satellite device while they were en route. Although Borders' use of the device was a help to rescuers, the weather on Sunday was a major hindrance.

A group of Baker County Search and Rescue team members started traveling to the location, which is in the Eagle Cap Wilderness several miles north of Cornucopia, in the Soldier Lake and Sugarloaf Mountain area.

McClay said rain was falling, snow was on the ground and powerful

winds were toppling trees as rescuers traveled higher into the mountains.

They eventually had to retreat late Sunday evening, McClay said.

On Monday morning, Baker County crews were joined by search and rescue members from Union County to resume the effort, McClay said.

The Union County team members arrived at the Baker County Sheriff's Office around 5 a.m., traveling from there to the mountains.

McClay said Borders apparently had left from the Cornucopia trailhead on Saturday, Oct. 23. The weather deteriorated on Sunday, and according to the text message the man sent to his friend, he was unable to get back to the trailhead and he needed help.

The first rifle elk season starts Wednesday, Oct. 27.



Alex Wittwer/The Observer, File

Shelia Evans waves from the Island City Lions Club pig train during the Cove Cherry Fair parade on Saturday, Aug. 21, 2021.

EVANS

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light on her uncommon spirit.

"No, no, I will never get burned out," Evans told Cosner. "This is my passion."

Evans' ceaseless drive to take on volunteer work to make her community a better place ended Saturday, Oct. 9, when she died of natural causes at Grande Ronde Hospital. A celebration of her life will be conducted at 10 a.m. Oct. 30 in Island City at Lighthouse Pentecostal Church.

Evans, 52, had been a member of the Island City Lions Club for at least 10 years and its president for about the past three years.

"I held her in very high regard. She was one of the best volunteers I have ever worked with," Cosner said. "I was worried about burnout but the more and more she took on the more enthusiastic she became."

Projects she took on included helping lead the annual La Grande Gun Show, directing the annual Santa Mall, which provides

an opportunity for children from lower-income families to buy presents for their families, and helping conduct Hog Wild Days in Island City and drives to collect eyeglasses for those in need. Many of the events Evans helped lead, including the gun show and Hog Wild Days, were major fundraisers for the Island City Lions Club.

Cosner said Evans' demeanor never changed regardless of the challenges she faced while helping lead and organize events.

"I don't think I ever heard her say a cross word. She handled everything with a smile," he said.

Evans was also well known to many as an employee at Apple Eyecare, where she worked for 22 years as its billing and insurance specialist. She strived to reduce bills for patients and make sure everyone could receive care and the glasses they needed, even if they could not afford it. This resulted in her becoming Apple Eyecare's patient advocate.

Dr. Spencer Luke, a doctor of optometry at Apple Eyecare, said that

"patient advocate" is not a formal title but Evans came to be described as such because of the extra mile she went to help patients.

Toni Grove, one of Evans' daughters, said her mother's affiliation with the Island City Lions Club was a perfect one for her, because if patients came in to Apple Eyecare who could not afford glasses or eye care she could arrange for them to receive both via the Lions Club.

Evans enjoyed her job at Apple Eyecare so much that on its website she described it as her major hobby.

"She loved her job because she loved people," said Julie Coreson, Apple Eyecare's office manager.

Dr. Daniel Beckner, a doctor of optometry at Apple Eyecare and an owner, compares Evans to the biblical character Tabitha, who is described in chapter nine of Acts in the New Testament. Tabitha was known for her good works and acts of charity.

"Shelia was a modern-day Tabitha," Beckner said. "She was giving to a fault."

WEAR A MASK!



Protect Your Friends

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- **Masks protect others against Covid-19.** Masks protect against the wearer spreading it to another person. "People should be free from other people's germs where possible, and that is why masks and social distancing are advised." ** Ask your doctor about wearing a mask!
- **Wear a mask even if you feel well.** People can feel well when they still have the virus and many people with the virus don't have symptoms. They can spread the virus to others through talking, sneezing, coughing and raising their voice through singing or shouting. *
- **Cloth masks can also protect others.** They reduce the amount of respiratory droplets sent into the air, thus reducing the chance of that virus going through the air to others. *
- **Masks provide enough oxygen.** You will not suffer from hypoxia or too much carbon dioxide while wearing a mask. Both oxygen and carbon dioxide can diffuse freely through the mask when you breath - even cloth masks *

* "Debunked myths about face masks" Kimberly Frodl, MD, see this Mayo Clinic article at:

<https://www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/hometown-health/speaking-of-health/debunked-myths-about-face-masks>

** "Wear a Mask, But Act as if it Doesn't Work," Harriet Hall, MD, see article at:

https://www.skeptic.com/reading_room/wear-a-face-mask-but-act-as-if-it-does-not-work-covid-19-coronavirus-pandemic/?gclid=CjwKCAjwn8SLBhAyaEiwAHNTJbXsq03nA_nU_ictDr_mkdy-frvnoneYLeEHMJVvD7lhWB_AHCEj61RoC_K8QAvD_BwE