

PUBLIC SAFETY REPORT

MONDAY, DEC. 13

2:17 a.m. — The Union County Sheriff's Office received a complaint from the The Lodge at Hot Lake Springs, 66172 Highway 203, Union, of a guest who was out of control. A deputy responded and took the person to another hotel.

3:33 a.m. — A caller reported someone screaming in the area of the 1800 block of Second Street, La Grande. Officers checked the area but found no screaming.

7:14 a.m. — A caller reported an unauthorized vehicle was in a handicapped parking spot at Green Tree Apartments, 2310 Q Ave., La Grande. A parking enforcement officer responded.

7:44 a.m. — A caller reported two horses on the loose on the 700 block of East Delta Street, Union. An animal enforcement officer responded and secured the horses.

8:27 a.m. — La Grande police received a report of a sex crime.

11:13 a.m. — La Grande police received a request for a welfare check at a residence on the 100 block of Willow Street. Officers responded and found an occupant had died. Police contacted Loveland Funeral Chapel, La Grande.

1:17 p.m. — A caller reported finding a puppy on the 1000 block of Jackson Avenue, La Grande. An animal enforcement officer responded and took the dog to the animal shelter at the Blue Mountain Humane Association, La Grande.

3:54 p.m. — La Grande police on foot patrol cited a 36-year-old woman at Max Square on a Union County warrant for two counts of second-degree trespassing. Police also cited her on a new count of trespassing. About 30 minutes later, police returned to Max Square and arrested the woman for trespassing and disorderly conduct.

10:23 p.m. — A caller on the 300 block of Fourth Street, La Grande, reported a runaway. An officer made contact, and the runaway was found.

TUESDAY, DEC. 14

3:20 a.m. — A caller reported bicycles that may be stolen were behind the Grande Ronde Fitness Club, 2214 Adams Ave., La Grande. An officer checked it out and found the bikes were of no value and had been there a long time.

7:07 a.m. — La Grande police received another complaint of an unauthorized vehicle in a handicapped parking spot at Green Tree Apartments, 2310 Q Ave. A parking enforcement officer responded and left a citation on the vehicle.

9:53 a.m. — The Union County Sheriff's Office arrested Sean Michael Stanford, 24, of North Powder, for second-degree burglary and mail theft that occurred on Nov. 29.

10:11 a.m. — La Grande police received a complaint about a burglary on the 1300 block of Madison Avenue. An officer made contact and took a report.

2:52 p.m. — The Union County Sheriff's Office received a request for a welfare check at a residence in North Powder. A deputy responded and found everything was fine.

4:06 p.m. — A caller reported gunshots on Otten Drive, La Grande. An officer responded and took information.

5:41 p.m. — A caller reported a train blocked Hilgard Lane, La Grande. Police notified Union Pacific Railroad.

9:59 p.m. — A caller reported suspicious circumstances at the Orchard Motel, 2206 Adams Ave., La Grande. Dispatch advised police of the call.

RECENT OREGON STATE POLICE ACTIVITY

Dec. 8, 5:17 p.m. — A trooper and emergency services responded to the eastbound side of Interstate 84 near milepost 244 for a crashed Chevrolet Express. State police reported the vehicle lost traction on black ice, moved across the right lane, hit the right shoulder of the road and rolled.

The driver was a 49-year old man and the passenger was a 37-year-old woman, both from Vancouver, Washington. The wreck ejected the passenger, and an ambulance took her to Grande Ronde Hospital, La Grande.

Neither were wearing seat belts, according to OSP. The driver reported replacing both front seats and the vehicle's seat belt system was not compatible with the new seats.

Duke the dog rescued from burning vehicle



Alex Wittwer/The Observer

La Grande Fire Department responded to a Ford F-250 on fire Wednesday, Dec. 15, 2021, around 9:25 a.m. on the corner of Jefferson Avenue and Fourth Street, after employees at the nearby La Grande Medical Center called 911. An employee at the building noticed a black Labrador was inside the vehicle, which was being enveloped with smoke, and broke out the passenger window and Steve West, a local resident, removed Duke the dog from the vehicle's cabin. Owner Rudolph Candler said it was his only form of transportation and due to his status as a retiree, he won't be able to afford another vehicle. It was unclear what caused the fire.

COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARD

Free firewood available Dec. 18 in La Grande

LA GRANDE — The Neighbors Together emergency woodlot will be giving wood-burning households in financial need up to a cord of firewood on Saturday, Dec. 18, from 9 a.m. to noon. Donations will be accepted but are not required. The woodlot is at 3309 N. Umattilla St. in La Grande. For more information visit www.neighborstogetherofunion-county.org or call 541-963-9126.

county.org or call 541-963-9126.

Live Nativity performances planned

ENTERPRISE — Four half-hour performances of a live reenactment of the Nativity begin at 5 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 18-19, next to the Wallowa Valley Eye Clinic in Enterprise, 515 W. North St. There will also be free cookies and hot chocolate. Donations are welcome. — *The Observer*

UPCOMING LOCAL SERVICES



Please follow guidelines regarding face coverings and social distancing at all gatherings.

Dec. 17 — LEROY BUSHMAN: 2 p.m. graveside service, Hillcrest Cemetery, La Grande.

Dec. 18 — JUNE MILLER: 10 a.m. memorial service, Damascus Road Church, La Grande.

Dec. 19 — MARY

REEDER: 1 p.m. celebration of life, La Grande Nazarene Church.

Jan. 15, 2022 — JIM LUNDY: 2 p.m. memorial service, Gilbert Center, Eastern Oregon University, La Grande.

— *calendar courtesy of Loveland Funeral Chapel*

DEATH NOTICES

Wanda L. Case Cove

Wanda L. Case, 79, of Cove, died Dec. 14, 2021, at her residence. Arrangements are by Loveland Funeral Chapel & Crematory, La Grande.

Clinton Millman La Grande

Clinton Millman, 31, of La Grande, died Dec. 13, 2021, at his residence. Arrangements are by Loveland Funeral Chapel & Crematory, La Grande.

Jan Randolph La Grande

Jan Randolph, 72, of La Grande, died Dec. 14, 2021, at her residence. Arrangements are by Loveland Funeral Chapel & Crematory, La Grande.

Phyllis I. Taylor La Grande

Phyllis I. Taylor, 80, of La Grande, died Dec. 14, 2021, at Wildflower Lodge. Arrangements are by Loveland Funeral Chapel & Crematory, La Grande.

Darryl R. Wray La Grande

Darryl R. Wray, 83, of La Grande, died Dec. 12, 2021, at Grande Ronde Hospital. Arrangements are by Loveland Funeral Chapel & Crematory, La Grande.

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OBITUARY

Terry R. Guisto

1947-2021 Formerly of La Grande

Terry Francis Guisto, 73, died suddenly Sept. 17, 2021, while working outdoors at his high-altitude home in Northern New Mexico. A private family celebration of his life was held at his home in October.

Terry was born Oct. 6, 1947, in Reno, Nevada. He spent several years working in La Grande at the old Eastside Tavern, which was owned by his parents during the 1960s and 1970s. He also worked for Union Pacific Railroad during that time. Terry retired from the Fish Division of Oregon Fish

and Wildlife, after a full career in Hood River.

Terry served two tours of duty as a decorated medical corpsman in the 173rd Sky Soldiers, during the Vietnam War.

Those who knew Terry respected his integrity and honesty. He was also known for his smile and ability to tell stories and laugh.

Survivors include his wife, Pat Guisto of Tierra Amarilla, New Mexico, and brother, Jamie Guisto of Seattle.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Emmitt and Thelma Guisto.



Guisto



PLEASE RECYCLE THIS PAPER

Christopher Lavern Schwebke

September 16, 1980 - December 5, 2021

Christopher Lavern Schwebke, 41, of La Grande, passed away on Sunday, December 5, 2021 at St. Luke's Medical Center, Boise, ID, from a rare blood disease called hemochromatosis. A celebration of life will be held at a later date.

Christopher was born on September 16, 1980 in La Grande, Oregon, to Marc and Anna (McClure) Schwebke. He resided in La Grande, OR, Hood River, OR and Yakima, WA. He attended grade school in La Grande and attended Hood River Middle and High Schools. He married his one true love, Crystal Dufour.

Christopher was a chef and father of 3 sons. He enjoyed woodworking, building things, helping neighbors, huckleberry picking, cooking, canning, gardening, target shooting and was an avid Blazers and Oregon Ducks fan.

Christopher is survived by his wife, Crystal; children, Trenton Schwebke, Skylar Schwebke of La Grande and Brendan Schwebke of North Carolina; parents, Marc and Anna Schwebke of La Grande; brothers, Krusz Schwebke of Klamath Falls, OR, and Tracy Schwebke (Valerie) of Pasco, WA; sister, Maryann Younger (Jeremy) of Springfield, OR; maternal grandmother, Cornelia McClure-German; 2 nieces and 4 nephews; great-aunts and uncles, Jan and Larry Bayliss and family, Duane and Gay Zander and family; aunts and uncles, Cinda McClure of Kent, WA, Jimmie and Lynn McClure of La Grande, OR, and Karen and Greg Balmer of Portland, OR; and many cousins. He was preceded in death by his grandfather, Jimmie O. McClure; aunt, Ruthie McClure; step-grandfather, Loydd German; grandmother, LaWanna Schwebke; and grandfather, Harold Schwebke.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions can be made to the family to help with expenses through Anna Schwebke at PO Box 1334, La Grande, OR, 97850 or the Salvation Army Angel Tree Program, <https://salvationarmynca.org/angeltree>. Online condolences may be made to the family at www.lovelandfuneralchapel.com.



Melvin Lee Buffington

May 15, 1937 - November 8, 2021

Melvin Lee "Mel" Buffington, quietly embarked on his next great journey from his La Grande home on November 8, 2021, after a life well-lived. He was 84. Born May 15th, 1937, in Baker, OR, Mel was the son of Cecil and Frances (Jory) Buffington.

His father was an itinerant jockey, so, rather than live a vagabond childhood, Mel spent most of his early years in the company of his maternal grandmother, Mildred Jory. She was a cook in logging camps and sawmill town hotels, so Mel lived in such places as Balm Creek, Whitney, Mission, Meacham, and for most of his youth, Pondsosa.

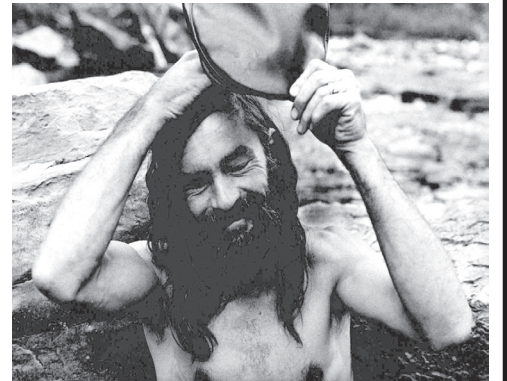
Among his earliest memories of life in Pondsosa was being small enough to crawl beneath the boardwalks between the hotel where he lived, the store, and the community center. He particularly looked forward to those explorations on Saturday and Sunday mornings after many of the weekend parties had dropped a fair amount of change through the gaps between the boards the previous night. He also remembered being older and having to endure the prolonged bus ride in the dark from Pondsosa to parochial school in Baker, and the return ride, again in the dark. He finished high school while living in Mission, and formed several lasting friendships among his First Peoples classmates.

Mel enlisted in the US Air Force in 1956, and served four years until his honorable discharge in 1960. He served as a Morse code translator at the Stuttgart, Germany Air Force Intelligence/Communications station. Upon his return to the United States, he went to work in the timber industry as a logging scaler, working in eastern Washington and in northeast Oregon. Besides logging, he worked at a travel trailer factory in the Grande Ronde Valley. He also worked as a passport photographer and a freelance press photographer. He retired after twenty-five years as the photography instructor at EOU.

In 1964, he met Beverly June Russell of La Grande. They were married in June of 1965, in La Grande. They moved to Albuquerque, NM, in 1966, where their son, Tyrone, was born in 1968. They divorced in 1970, but remained friends. Mel attended both EOSC (now EOU) in La Grande, and UNM in Albuquerque, where he earned a BS in English.

Along with photography, Mel enjoyed a wide diversity of interests and pastimes. Most mornings were spent at a local bookstore, drinking coffee, reading the news, and seeing people. Conversely, he loved being deep in a quiet forest. He traveled widely across the West, stopping frequently to capture another image with his camera. Anywhere he found a quiet pool on a stream, he'd search for flat rocks to skip. After photography, he devoted much of his spare time to writing poetry. He also created a series of drawings featuring fanciful creatures called "Upflings". Several books of his poetry were published, as were many of his photographs. There were a number of gallery showings of his photographs and Upflings. His other love was music and dancing. A friend remarked that the most enduring image she has of him is of his unrestrained, exuberant dancing, indifferent to possible criticism from onlookers. He was comfortable and confident enough in himself that, while he did nothing to provoke comment, he did nothing to prevent it either.

Mel lived his life with little regard to



conventional lifestyles. He spent some time sojourning with the Rainbow People. While he did live in a "normal" house, he didn't mow the lawn until the fire department forced him to do so, because he enjoyed the natural look of the plant growth. He also spent several seasons living out of a Pinto station wagon and a cave near Albuquerque. For several years after his retirement, he alternated his residence between Portland and La Grande, living for three months at a time in one or the other, always stopping for meditation at Celilo Park. As with the rest of his life, Mel's spirituality, while deep, was definitely non-traditional. Like many of the First Peoples he knew, he was deeply in tune with the earth and its inhabitants, and was particularly connected to coyotes and eagles. His son, Tyrone, noted that the following lines are one of his poems which appears at the beginning of most of his books.

"Thank you coyote spirit for your guidance."

"May my heart be always open to yr wizzzdom."

Mel had two trademark greetings. For many years, his response to a phone call was always "Good Morning!"; regardless of the time of day or night. Later, people came to expect his characteristic "Quack Quack" as his greeting.

Mel was not an initiator. He never tried to influence or direct anyone's actions. He would give his opinion or suggestion if requested, but would never offer comment unless he was invited to do so. He felt that he shouldn't cause things to happen, but should merely allow them. He even refused to vote in elections because he felt that it would be trying to impose his will on society. Mel was a keen observer, and his insights were equally keen. He had no aspirations to be a mover and shaker. He lived sharply aware of everything around him, as though he were an ideal camera, unobtrusive, disturbing nothing, capturing everything in his imagination. Watching, always watching.

Samuel Clemens wrote, "The fear of death follows from the fear of life. A man who lives fully is prepared to die at any time." Mel Buffington, the "Traveling Enigma", lived his own extraordinary life to the fullest!

Mel is survived by his son, Tyrone Buffington; and partner, Brooke Shevlin, of Union, OR; cousins Janice "Donnie" Baxter, of Medical Springs, OR, Monte cre Bennett, and Carrie Lynn, both of Portland, OR; and Doug Jory, of Hines, OR. He was preceded in death by his grandmother, Mildred Jory; his parents, Cecil and Frances Buffington; and his brother Cecil Thomas "Tommy" Buffington. A celebration of life gallery showing of many of his works will be announced at a future date.

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