

LEGACY

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Hays, OSP Lt. Dave Aydelotte, Union County Sheriff's Office Lt. Ken Woodward, La Grande Police Officer Scott Norton and La Grande Mayor Steve Clements. The names of the fallen officers were read to the crowd in attendance, while flower wreaths were placed above the memorial outside the law enforcement building.

Those in attendance honored the lives of Amos "Spud" Helms, Michael Lynn Cheney, Raymond Williams and Gary Byassee.

Helms, a trooper with OSP, sustained fatal gunshot wounds in October 1931 on Adams Avenue in La Grande. The trooper served with OSP for six months prior to his death.

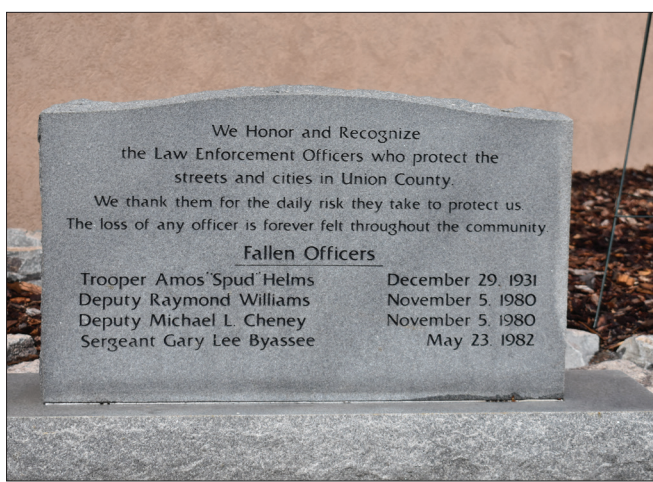
In 1980, Union County Sheriff's Office deputies Cheney and Williams were killed in their patrol pickup on Highway 82 near Elgin when a drunk driver struck their vehicle head-on. Cheney, who had served in Union County for only 14 days after moving from the Douglas County Sheriff's Department, was 38 years old — he was survived by two daughters. Williams, who was 33 years old, served with the Union County Sheriff's Office for five years and was survived by a wife, son and daughter.

La Grande Police Cpl. Byassee died at the age of 30 in the line of duty in 1982, after a leg injury sustained during a police training session in San Luis Obispo, California. Byassee developed blood clots due to the injury, which traveled to his lungs and led to his death before completing treatment in Seattle. Byassee served in the La Grande Police Department for six years, prior to which he served two years with the Union County Police Department — he was survived by a wife and



Davis Carbaugh/The Observer

Pastor Franklin Humber leads the invocation during a Union County law enforcement memorial ceremony on Friday, May 13, 2022, outside the county's law enforcement building, La Grande.



Davis Carbaugh/The Observer

A memorial stone recognizing four law enforcement officers who lost their lives in Union County stands on display outside the Union County law enforcement building, La Grande, on Saturday, May 14, 2022.

two daughters.

"The last few years have been challenging times for law enforcement and the men and women who wear the badge," Bell

said at the ceremony.

"It's important for those who go on duty every day to recognize that what they're doing matters."

MORGAN

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creek is unpredictable and often floods in the spring.

"I thought, 'I got to get that thing out of the way,'" he said.

He stepped on a patch of ice on a footbridge he had built some four decades ago, landing hard on the bridge and breaking a lumbar vertebrae before going into the creek itself.

"I knew I was going to fall off the bridge," he said.

When he did, he landed partially on the bank and broke several ribs.

While he tried to get himself into a better position, his condition worsened.

"My vision went totally black," he said. "My eyes were open but I could see (only) black. And worse than the loss of vision, I couldn't breathe."

He said his breathing was "paralyzed."

That's when one of the miracles he experienced took place.

"I said, 'Help me, Jesus.' I raised my right hand in the air. He grabbed a hold of my wrist. I couldn't see him, but something pulled me up on my back."

In his new position, he was able to breathe again, but as he was turned away from his house, his attempts to call for more help failed. Eventually, he stopped yelling to conserve energy.

"When I got back on my back, I floated down the creek a little ways. I hurt so



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain

Sam Morgan points Wednesday, May 4, 2022, to where he landed in Trout Creek after falling from the now-defunct footbridge behind him on Jan. 12 near his home in Enterprise.

bad I couldn't lift myself at all," Morgan said.

He was still in the water of Trout Creek, which he said runs at a temperature of about 41 degrees.

It was a couple hours before his son went to check on him, found him in the water and called 911.

Medical personnel arrived and were able to extract Morgan from the water. His body temperature had reached near-fatal temperatures at about 80 degrees. Perhaps just a few more minutes and it would have been too late.

That his son was even there to help him that day, he said, was the second miracle.

Morgan's son had been living in China prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, but left just before it started.

The third miracle might actually have been that he was in such cold water. Morgan said he is certain the chilly water brought his body temperature to low enough levels that his swelling was greatly

reduced.

"I'm convinced in my own mind that hypothermia is probably the reason I'm not paralyzed. I broke seven thoracic vertebrae and a lumbar vertebrae," he said.

He describes his back as constantly feeling like a leg that has fallen asleep, but he added, "I don't hurt, at least, in my mind. But it's hard to get what you'd call comfortable."

Morgan has thought through if he has a purpose yet to fulfill given he not only came out of the ordeal alive, but not paralyzed and, seemingly, divinely spared.

"What is it? I've talked it over with my Bible study group," he said of his purpose. "Just to praise his name, give witness to what I went through, and try to be a better person. That's the mandate of Christianity. Sinners are forgiven, but that doesn't mean you're not supposed to try to get better. Maybe he has something else planned that I haven't run across yet."

SCHOOLS

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to be in place depending upon the level of the school district's infection rate. Mendoza said that the school district would continue working closely with health care organizations in the county such as the Center for Human Development to make sure that it was moving in the right direction.

Earl Pettit, Cove School District's superintendent, voiced a similar sentiment when asked about what his district would do if COVID-19 rates spiked again.

"We have a protocol in place for communicable disease and that is what we will follow," he said.

Union School District Superintendent Carter Wells said his district also would strive to take matters into its own hands.

"We would consider all factors and do what is best for our students and staff," he said. "We would consider all options."

Doug Hislop, superintendent of the Imbler School District, also said he would want his school district to be able to decide the steps it thinks would be best if COVID-19 rates spiked again in Union County.

He said he would not want masks in schools to be a topic of debate again. This is not an argument Hislop would look forward to being involved in again because it became so heated earlier in the

pandemic.

"It divided the community," he said.

Hislop hopes that he never has to be in the middle of the mask debate again.

"I would not wish that upon anyone," he said.

The Oregon Health Authority and Oregon Department of Education also reminded schools that students or staff with COVID-like symptoms have to stay home, and asked families not to send sick children to school, to have them tested and, if eligible, to get them vaccinated.

—Oregon Public Broadcasting reporter Elizabeth Miller and The Oregonian reporter Fedor Zarkhin contributed to this report.



The Observer, File

Uriah Gatliff, a student at La Grande Middle School, works on an assignment during class on Thursday, April 7, 2022. Oregon officials have asked schools to prioritize in-person learning amid rising COVID-19 infections by monitoring spread of disease in their community and absenteeism, offering testing and recommending or even mandating masks before moving to remote learning.

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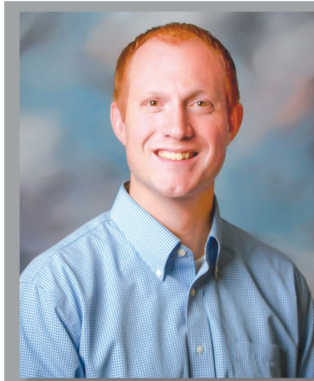
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