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Cattlemen pledge \$10K to fight Owyhee Monument

BY TODD ARRIOLA
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Between 30 and 40 people attended a special Baker County Livestock Association (BCLA) meeting at the Sunridge Inn Restaurant, on Wednesday, March 9, 2016, including Representative Cliff Bentz, and Senator Ted Ferrioli via telephone, in support of a singular goal: to oppose the proposed 2.5 million acre Owyhee Canyonlands

National Monument designation.

The group hopes to convince Oregonians, including Governor Kate Brown, and ultimately, President Barack Obama, that the designation would be a devastating blow for Malheur County and the State.

Attending the meeting and giving a special presentation were Ysabel Bilbao of Gallatin Public Affairs, and Elias Eiguren,

Steve Russell, and Mark Joyce, of the Owyhee Basin Stewardship Coalition (OBSC). OBSC, whose mission is "advocating for Natural Resource Industries in Malheur County," hired Gallatin to lead the opposition effort.

BCLA President Jake Bingham was also joined by Wannie Mackenzie, Drew Martin, Dotty and Myron Miles, Curt and Cheryl Martin, Ed Trindle, Martin Arritola, Ralph

and Myrna Morgan, Bill and Lorrie Harvey, Kody Justus, Bruce Nichols, and Wes Morgan, among others.

The meeting was called to order by Bingham, followed by reading of the minutes, from the February 25, 2016 monthly meeting, by Dotty. The minutes were approved.

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OWYHEE MONUMENT
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L-R: Drew Martin and Jake Bingham were among those who voted to fight the Owyhee land grab.

Donkey basketball comes back to Halfway



Photo courtesy of Rebecca Smith.

Teachers (in red) Jason Jordan Smith (back) and Cammie DeCastro squared off against the students at Pine Eagle Charter School as the first donkey basketball game in years was held in the gym.

BY CARMELITA HOLLAND
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A heavy rain storm in Pine Valley failed to prevent many families in the Panhandle of Baker County from coming to enjoy the Donkey Basketball game the evening of March 11, held in the gymnasium of Pine Eagle Charter School.

It has been several years since the Donkey Basketball team has come to Halfway, but its reputation was attraction enough to fill most of the bleachers.

The man who brought the nine donkeys from their home at a ranch near Entiat, Washington, who identified himself as "Charley, the Referee," said they work the donkeys only two months a year.

"The rest of the year, they eat," he said.

"We've had this service going for seventeen years, but have not used the same donkeys. They live longer than horses do, but we use them only between the ages of five and twelve years of age. After they grow older than twelve they get too smart."

"It's my job to keep everybody from getting hurt," he said.

During the game Charley was on the floor on foot, moving about with the players, carrying a small, long stick. Referring to flat pads on each donkey, instead of saddles,

Charley said, "Those packs are designed to protect the

backs of the donkeys, not the butts of the riders!"

"We play with four people on donkeys and one on the floor in the center—that makes five players, the usual number in a basketball team," he explained.

The donkeys were marched inside the gym wearing special heavy, rubber horse shoes to prevent damage to expensive hardwood floors.

All contestants wore helmets.

Both students and adults laughed, cheered and clapped hands watching teachers struggling to mount, and stay on donkeys without the usual convenience of having stirrups. Each person had only two straps to hold to, four inches wide, one wrapped tightly around each end of a bare back pack (no saddles) and around the bellies of each donkey.

There were four teams: Firemen vs. Idaho Power Company, and teachers/staff vs. students. Receiving the greatest attention were teachers Camie DeCastro, Chris Decastro, Morgan Gover, Jason Jordan Smith, and Troy Tubbs with staff member Angie Chetwood.

Local referees were Nick Melchior, Tallon Vandimier, Dalton Robinet, Jacob Huff,

When anyone astride a donkey threw a basketball, that went through the hoop the crowd went wild.

Said Smith's wife Rebecca, "It was a fun and unique family event. The kids loved petting the donkeys between games. I had friends who couldn't believe there was such a thing as donkey basketball. Loved it!"

Semi crash kills one



Photo courtesy of Carl Dedrick.

I-84 was shut down Tuesday afternoon from Pendleton to Ontario in both directions after two serious accidents.

On March 15, 2016 at about 11:25 a.m., Oregon State Police Troopers (OSP) and emergency crews were dispatched to a rollover crash involving a commercial motor vehicle on Interstate 84, milepost 349 eastbound.

At 11:55 a.m., as emergency personnel were responding to the scene, a second crash involving two commercial motor vehicles, occurred at milepost 348 eastbound, killing a driver.

Preliminary information indicates that at 11:25 a.m., a 2006 Freightliner pulling a 2010 Utility semi-trailer, operated by Ivan Berezin, age 34, from Gresham, was traveling eastbound on Interstate 84 at milepost 349 when for unknown reasons, the vehicle veered off the roadway into the median.

The vehicle traveled back onto the roadway and overturned blocking both eastbound lanes.

SEE CRASH PAGE 5

Johnston sentenced

• WOMAN GETS JAIL, COMMUNITY SERVICE AND PROBATION FOR FLINGING TAMPON DURING ARREST

BY KERRY McQUISTEN
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On March 9, 2016, a 12-person Baker County Circuit Court Jury convicted Marlene Frances Johnston of one count of Aggravated Harassment, a Class C Felony, with a vote of 11-1.

The State was represented by Baker County District Attorney Matt Shirtcliff, and Johnston was represented by Steve Joseph from La Grande.

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Friday Sunny and seasonal. Highs near 50. Mostly clear at night with a few clouds possible. Lows near 30.

Saturday Mostly sunny and warmer. Highs in the mid 50s. Partly cloudy and more mild at night. Lows in the mid 30s.

Sunday Partly sunny with a chance for rain showers. Chance of rain is 40%. Highs in the upper 50s. Lows near freezing at night.

Your weekend weather forecast for Baker County.



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