

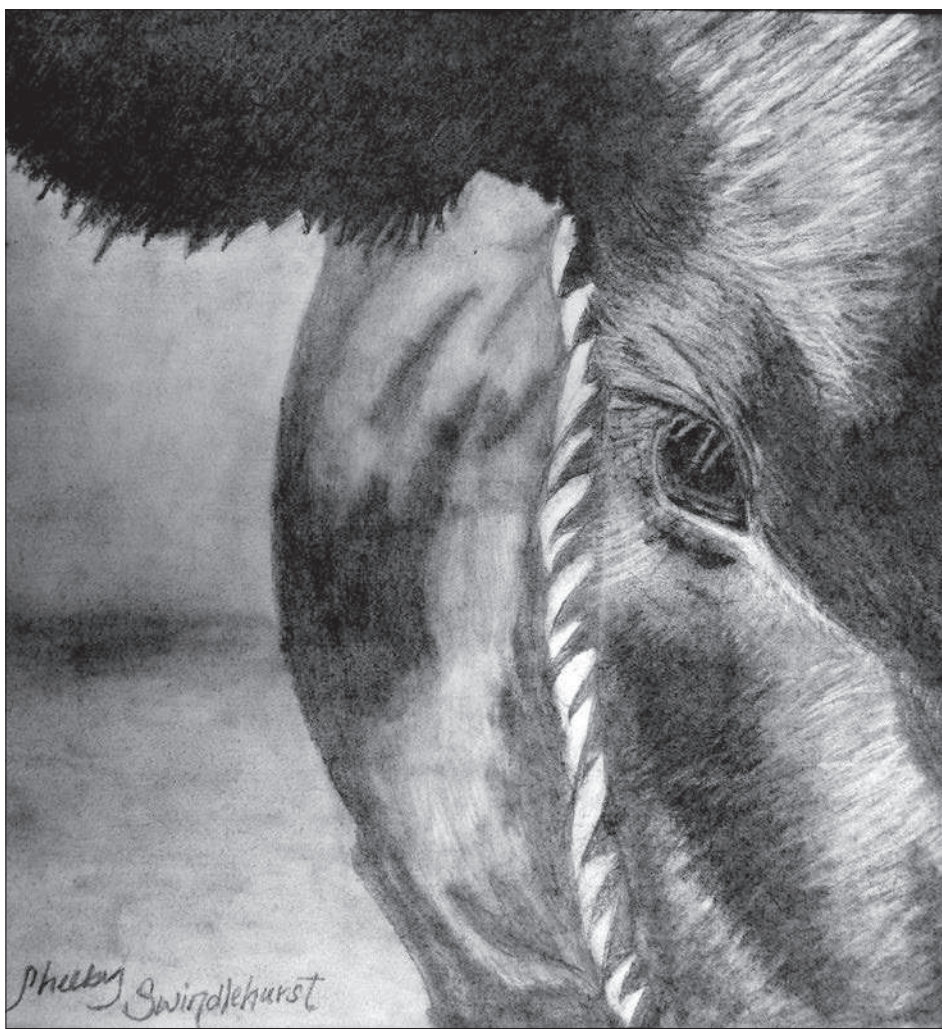
# Local

## Burnt River student wins Congressional art contest

U.S. Rep. Greg Walden (R-Hood River) announced that Shelby Swindlehurst, a senior at Burnt River High School, has been selected as the Baker County winner for Oregon's Second Congressional District in the 2016 Congressional Art Competition. In a record year for entries, Phoebe was ranked highly by a panel of local judges, including Lori Sams, art gallery director at Blue Mountain Community College, artist Malcolm Phinney of Phinney Gallery of Fine Art in Joseph, and associate professor of art at Eastern Oregon University Michael Sell. Shelby's art will hang in Walden's office in La Grande.

"I want to congratulate Shelby on this impressive achievement in such a competitive year," said Walden. "Phoebe is a testament to Shelby's artistic talent, and she should be very proud of this accomplishment."

The overall winner of the Congressional Art Competition, Sage Hassell, a senior at Mountain View High School, will travel to Washington, D.C. to see her artwork displayed in the national student art exhibit in the U.S. Capitol and attend a reception in her honor June 23, 2016. "The Congressional Art Competition is a tremendous opportunity for young Oregonians interested in art, and I want to thank all of the students, teachers, and families who made this year's competition a success," Walden said. "I would also like to thank our fourteen judges from around Oregon's Second



Submitted Photo.

Shelby Swindlehurst's art is now officially prize-winning.

District for their expertise in judging over one hundred pieces of our talented students' work."

Judges for this year's competition included: Rogue Gallery & Art Center board member Nancy Jo Mullen, and their executive director Kim Hearon; Central Oregon Community College art professor Bill Hoppe; former Jackson County Commissioner and high school art teacher Sue Kuppilas; associate professor of art at Eastern Oregon University Michael Sell; Southern Oregon University professor of art Peg

Sjogren; Southern Oregon University professor of painting and drawing Cody Bustamante; fine arts professor at Treasure Valley Community College Robin Jackson; Treasure Valley Community College photography instructor Ted Fink; Treasure Valley Community College visual arts professor Tammy Kinney; Betty Faves Memorial Art Gallery director Lori Sams; artist and owner of Phinney Gallery of Fine Art Malcolm Phinney; Mark Nilsson, artist and owner of Mark Nilsson Artist Studio; and Cathy

Stever, owner and artist at Cathy Stever Gallery." The Congressional Art Competition is a nationwide program for students to showcase their artistic abilities and to highlight the importance of art education. Since its start in 1982, more than 650,000 high school students from around the country have participated. Photos of the winners and more information on the competition can be found via Walden's website at <https://walden.house.gov/art-competition>.

## Warm Springs couple found dead

Investigators have found the remains of Mark Kevin Johnson, Jr., in Deschutes County. FBI agents and Warm Springs Police Officers were trying to locate Johnson as part of the investigation into the violent death of his wife, Candelabra Rhoan.

Warm Springs officers who were doing a welfare check on Ms. Rhoan found her body inside her Warm Springs home in the early morning hours of Thursday, May 19th.

At approximately 3 pm on Saturday, May 21, 2016, Deschutes County Sheriff's deputies were dispatched to a vehicle over the cliff in the Deschutes River Canyon near Lower Bridge Way (Terrebonne, OR). Deputies arrived and determined a single male occupant of the vehicle was deceased. The vehicle was located more than 100 feet down the slope below a 50-foot sheer cliff.

Sheriff's Detectives responded to the scene to

investigate.

Due to the nature of the terrain, Deschutes County Search and Rescue was called out to recover the body.

For safety reasons, that recovery was delayed until this morning. On Sunday, May 22nd, 21 Search and Rescue volunteers and two Special Services (SAR) deputies assisted investigators with recovering the body of the deceased. The recovery involved a ropes system to raise the body to

the top of the canyon.

Deschutes County Sheriff's Detectives continue to investigate the vehicle incident in cooperation with other agencies, including the FBI, Warm Springs Police Department and the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office.

Both Johnson, Jr., 33, and Ms. Rhoan, age 30, were members of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs.

## VetTix gives free event tix to vets

Veteran Tickets Foundation (Vet Tix), a national nonprofit that provides free event tickets to the U.S. military community, announced today that it has now delivered 2 million tickets since 2008. This is the equivalent of donating enough tickets to fill Madison Square Garden to capacity more than 100 times, the Hollywood Bowl 114+ times, or Soldier Field 32+ times.

"Vet Tix was born eight years ago. I was at football game and noticed that there were still empty seats, even at one of the most attended games of the season," said U.S. Navy Veteran Mike Focareto, founder and CEO of Veteran Tickets Foundation. Focareto continued, "Vet Tix has grown into a thriving

word-of-mouth program. It has benefitted thousands of military families who often can't afford tickets to events. We've also heard from veterans that Vet Tix is helping them reintegrate into civilian life after their service."

Vet Tix supports all branches of currently serving military, veterans and their families, as well as the immediate families of those killed in action by distributing tickets to sporting events, concerts, performing arts and family activities in all 50 states. This includes many college and professional sports teams within the MLB, NBA, NFL, NHL, and WNBA, in addition to NASCAR, concert and entertainment events.

Where there are empty

seats, Vet Tix seeks to fill them with people who have served our country and their families. Giving an event ticket is an expression of appreciation and recognition that honors the service of the troops today and long after their tour of duty has passed. Attending these events helps veterans reduce stress through entertainment, strengthen family bonds, build life long memories, and encourage them to stay engaged with American life and local communities.

"We are overwhelmed by the generosity of so many ticket donors and supporters who have been paramount to our tremendous growth of over 500,000 tickets in less than a year," Focareto said. "Our 2 million ticket milestone

could have been a family attending a circus event, a date night at a Kenny Chesney concert or four buddies at a New York Yankee's game. Helping our veterans attend events provides positive family and life experiences after their years of service to our country."

Vet Tix started in 2008, and distributed 1,290 tickets in Phoenix that year. The organization grew over the next six years to celebrate its millionth ticket given away in July 2015, and this quickly rose to 1.5 million tickets distributed by August 2015.

Vet Tix is a national 501(c)(3) nonprofit foundation, and it ranked as the 2016 Top-rated Nonprofit in the United States by GreatNonprofits.

## Bennett

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He said he was living in Eugene during the attack on Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941, which was before he was married to Jean. "The whole country did an about turn...the factories, instead of making washing machines and cars, they were making equipment for the war...The women folk, I'd like to give them credit, because back in '41 and '42, my future wife went to riveting school in Eugene, so she could be a riveter..." Robert said that Jean then went to work for an airplane factory in Portland.

Robert was aware that he would be drafted into the military, and the couple married on December 21, 1942. Shortly after that, while Jean was working at the factory, Robert received a physical, and he was told that he was fit to join any service he liked. He chose the Marine Corps, and he was shipped off to boot camp in San Diego, California. During this time, Jean found out she could make more income as a welder, so she attended welding school, in Portland.

Post-boot camp, Robert signed up for radio operator training, and he was sent to Texas A&M, to receive that instruction, while Jean finished welding training. Jean arrived at the Portland shipyards to begin work, and she discovered that the gate had been locked. She asked what happened, and a female there told her that a worker had been found murdered in the hold of one of the ships, which prompted Jean to quickly conclude that she would seek less dangerous work. She joined Robert at Texas A&M, until he finished training, after which he was promoted to Corporal, while the rest of the class made Private First Class, he said.

On the one-year anniversary of their marriage, December 21, 1943, Robert was put on a troop train headed for California, as Jean stood at the depot with suitcase in hand, unsure of what to do, until a Navy buddy of Robert's somehow managed to get her onto the train—the only female there. "We shipped out of San Francisco on January 1, 1944. I was assigned the 1st Marine Air Wing Headquarters Squadron, South Pacific, and it took us almost a month... on a Liberty Ship, to get down to... the Solomon Islands...We were building up to invade Rabaul, on New Britain Island, just off the Philippines..." Robert said.

He said that the the decision from "the powers that be" was made to bypass Rabaul, and to land instead on a small island north of Rabaul, since it was less fortified. "It was solid jungle," Robert said. Troops built an airfield, and he said that sleeping accommodations included a hammock with mosquito netting, hung between two palm trees, over a foxhole. "When the Japanese came over with their bombers, we would just unzip (the netting), and roll out in our foxholes," he said.

A radio station was set up on the island, and Robert worked as a radio operator, relaying messages from Australians, who acted as Japanese stronghold and fortification spotters, using Morse code. He said he was informed that he was supposed to have received a commendation for this effort from the Australian government, but he couldn't confirm that. Robert did receive, among other medals, Consolidation of Solomon Islands, Bismarck Archipelago, and Expert Rifleman. "It was not too much of a physical combat with me; it was more long-range radio work, so I wasn't really involved in any hand-to-hand combat over there," he said.

While Robert was there, Jean gave birth to the couple's first daughter, Barbara Jean. (They had five children total—three girls and two boys). Robert said while communicating back and forth via V-Mail (short for Victory Mail, a hybrid, secure mail delivery system during World War II), he and Jean found out they both had picked the same name for her, after Robert (Barbara was a form of "Bobbie"), and Jean, of course, after his wife.

Currently, a couple from The Dalles manage the historic Pondosa Store, which Robert still owns, located near Medical Springs. He explained that during the 1960s, Jean's brother, Lester Gaddy, who was a disabled Navy veteran (his ship was struck by a kamikaze pilot), found an advertisement for the sale of the former Collins mill town (near where the store is now), and bought the property partially because of the love of the area.

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## Halfway man arrested on sex abuse charges

On May 20, 2016, Baker County Sheriff's Deputies arrested Alan Steele, born April 11, 1961 or Clear Creek Road on Halfway, for Sex Abuse in the First Degree. The allegations of sex abuse involved a juvenile male.

The sexual contact with the juvenile was reported to have started when he was 13 years old.

A search warrant was conducted at Mr. Steele's residence relating to the allegations.

Mr. Steele was transported and lodged in the Baker County Sheriff's Office Jail.



Photo Courtesy of the Baker County Sheriff's Office

Alan Steele.