

Local

Forest Access for All Banquet

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Palmer was referring to media spin regarding the Malheur Wildlife Refuge occupation, his being the subject of a Department of Justice (DOJ) investigation, and the respondent in a lawsuit regarding public records.

On the subject of FAFA, he said, “We’re all here for one cause, and it basically revolves around our public lands...” When local communities aren’t seeing revenue from the sales of timber, for example, he said, the result is cuts in services, such as school districts. “We’ve got to look at young people, and encourage them to run for public office...and encourage them to be our next leadership...and carry this torch for us...” he said. He emphasized the need for a major cut back in government regulations, and he criticized the Equal Access to Justice Act (EAJA), because “It’s detrimental to us; it’s killing us...We’ve got to fight back...I appreciate what FAFA does...” A standing ovation followed Palmer’s speech.

George introduced Harvey, and George criticized some surrounding counties for their government-to-government method of interaction with federal agencies, “collaboration,” as opposed to a stronger county stance that Harvey heavily promotes and practices, “coordination,” with those same agencies. “Bill’s the only one you’ve really got, in Northeastern Oregon, that I’m aware of, that’s doing that...” George said.

Harvey said, to Palmer, “...I can’t thank you enough for standing up, and staying in there...We would thank you for your service to us...” He praised the group FAFA and its efforts throughout the years, and he said, to guests, “You’re helping them to finance the next fight...If you don’t think it’s coming--sorry, it’s coming...I’d

like to say--unfortunately, Mark (Bennett) and I have to say--we’re the government (Harvey, Bennett, and Commissioner Bruce Nichols, comprising the County Commission Board), and we’re here to help you,” which prompted laughter. “We are your government--we don’t represent anyone else outside this county...”

He said that the Federal government no longer makes that statement or offers help, but rather, battles citizens at every turn, while daring them to respond. In referencing government-to-government coordination meetings in regards to the U.S. Forest Service’s Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision (BMFPR), he said, to Forest Service staff, “We will work through your...Plan Revision, and we will come to some consistencies--some agreements...”

He said that the process worked for a while, but it’s become frustrating, the Forest Service has stalled progress, and asked the County to blindly sign off on the Plan that’s in a seemingly vague status, and he said, to Forest Service staff, “You’re really staring to sound like, and look like (Democratic U.S. House Minority Leader) Nancy Pelosi,” which prompted more laughter. “We don’t sign something that’s wrong...This group (FAFA) has fought since 2004...”

Harvey criticized the Forest Service regarding blocked road access and “Designated Routes,” which he said is unacceptable to the County, but to local Forest Service staff’s credit, he said it isn’t really them ultimately dictating what will and will not happen, but that those orders and philosophies come from Washington, D.C.

In discussing the causes of fires, he said, “We don’t have man-made global warming, okay? That’s pathetic...” He cited major reasons for the pattern

of large wildfires--overgrown, huge fuel loads, and mismanagement of National Forest lands, including the lack in logging and timber sales, which he said could provide jobs and an economic boost.

“Thank you so much for helping us tonight, to raise some money, to continue the battle...Awareness is what we’re looking for. Help people to understand...” Harvey said.

George provided a brief FAFA update, which included the detail that FAFA is working with Portland-based attorney Tyler Smith, on some issues, including drafting letters to the Forest Service regarding the BMFPR, and around 550 outreach letters, to those people who commented on the BMFPR.

George said that the timeline for the release of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the BMFPR is confusing, because he’s heard different dates, anywhere from June, to August, of this year. He said that FAFA watches these timelines closely, but citizens need to ultimately provide comments on released documents, because, “We cannot comment for you.. Your voice matters, and you’ve got to use it...We’re going to need your help... It’s serious...I’m not somebody to bluster and (expletive) you...I’ve watched Forest Rangers and District Supervisors laugh at people, and tell them...” that they don’t have access to certain roads, and he criticized the Forest Service on the subject of Travel Management.

After about a fifteen-minute break, George announced the closing of the silent auction, and he introduced Barreto, who provided a legislative update.

Barreto said, in referencing State budget issues, that Democrats have proposed cuts where “...it hurt people the most...” During a meeting that

included Democratic Senator Richard Devlin, a member of the Ways and Means Committee, Barreto asked Devlin, with the knowledge that ten years ago the State would be facing these issues, why a proper budget couldn’t be proposed, and Devlin said, “The scope of what we think we should provide, we find we cannot afford,” which prompted laughter. “That is the problem we have over in Salem...” Barreto said.

He said that members of the Legislature should be working together and finding compromises, if need be, to come to budget solutions, but he faces frustration, and the reality is that “It doesn’t work like that, over in Salem, and typically, rural Oregon gets the brunt of any decision that’s made. Do I have great news for you? No, I don’t,” which prompted more laughter. “I really wish I did,” he said.

Barreto said that the Legislature spends major funding to promote the idea of business in Oregon, while stifling it, which makes no sense, and that charging businesses more for taxes is not going to promote growth. “That’s what we’re up against, over in Salem... There are days when you say, ‘There’s no common sense here.’ You gotta get involved...” he said, as he encouraged participation in voting, though he recognized that many don’t feel their vote counts on State matters. A standing ovation followed Barreto’s speech.

George announced the winning ticket for a Windham Weaponry AR-15 (Armalite Rifle), in .223 caliber, which was donated at a reduced rate by York’s Park Grocery & Sporting Goods. Lorrie Harvey was awarded the rifle, and she in turn donated it to be auctioned off, to George’s surprise and appreciation, who said, “Rifles are like shoes for women--you can never have too many,” which prompted laughter and applause.

George, with the help of a couple of young and enthusiastic assistants, dispersed the silent auction items to the winning bidders. He recognized Lorrie, Pam Noble, Cindy Frazier, Jo Marlette, Bille Jo George, and John Phillis, for their efforts in association with the event. George said that he was recognizing the ladies, and that, while Phillis is a not a lady, he also put forth major effort, selling tickets.

Dailey began the live auction at about 8:15 p.m., the AR-15 rifle being the first item up for bid, which went to Kerry Matthews, for \$800. Dailey said, “Remember, it’s not what you’re buying, it’s what you’re doing--to kick some butt, on the Federal government side.”

With several young and enthusiastic assistants helping to model and disperse the rest of the items, Dailey continued the live auction, to which he added his own personal form of entertainment, including jokes throughout, confirming George’s earlier claim of Dailey’s ability.

SEE FAFA BANQUET PAGE 8

Speelman pleads guilty

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The Criminally Negligent Homicide charge stemmed from the death of her infant son Tracin Givens. Speelman was co-sleeping with the child, which was determined to be the cause of death by the Oregon Medical Examiner’s Office.

Speelman’s toxicology results indicated she had actively been using multiple drugs but there was strong evidence she was under the influence of hydrocodone at the time of the death. Speelman did not have a prescription for the hydrocodone.

“Drug use was a key factor in obtaining the indictment in this case. Through the investigation it was determined that Speelman had been counseled on the risks of co-sleeping at Saint Alphonsus Hospital when her child was born. Clear evidence of prior knowledge of the risks of co-sleeping and drug use at the time of the co-sleeping led to the indictment and conviction in this case. The fact that Speelman has taken responsibility for her child’s death, and is a good candidate for intensive drug treatment were factors taken into consideration by the Court in allowing her to be on probation once she has served her jail sentence,” said D.A. Matt Shirtcliff.

Steele convicted on sex abuse charges

On May 23, 2017 Alan Steele (DOB 04-11-1961) of 47887 Clear Creek Rd. Halfway, Oregon pled guilty to three counts of Sexual Abuse in the Third Degree one other misdemeanor count was dismissed as part of a plea agreement with the District Attorney’s Office.

Steele was sentenced by Baker County Circuit Court Judge Greg Baxter to two years in the Baker County Jail on two of the sex abuse charges. On the third charge, Steele was sentenced to one year in jail suspended upon successful completion of formal probation for five years with the sex offender package. Steele will be required to register as a sex offender.

Steele was originally charged with three counts of First Degree Sexual Abuse which are class B felonies and carry prison time. He was also charged with one count of Sexual Abuse in the Third Degree a class A misdemeanor. The maximum sentence for a class A misdemeanor is one year in jail. Through further investigation by the Baker County Sheriff’s Office it was determined that the victim was 14 years old at the time of all of the offenses which only allowed the charges to go forward as class A misdemeanors.

Said District Attorney Matt Shirtcliff, “The goal was for Mr. Steele to serve prison time on the felony charges but the age of the victim did not allow that to occur under Oregon law.”

Steele will receive credit for time served on one of the misdemeanors counts as he has been in jail for one year. He will now serve another year in the county jail on the second misdemeanor count. Upon release he will be on probation on the third misdemeanor count and will have to complete sex offender treatment. If he violates his probation, he will serve an additional year in jail.

Man arrested after being served

On May 22, 2017 at approximately 5:00 p.m., Baker County Sheriff’s Deputies arrived at a residence on Valley Street in an attempt to serve a restraining order on Kevin Beauford (DOB 11/2/62).

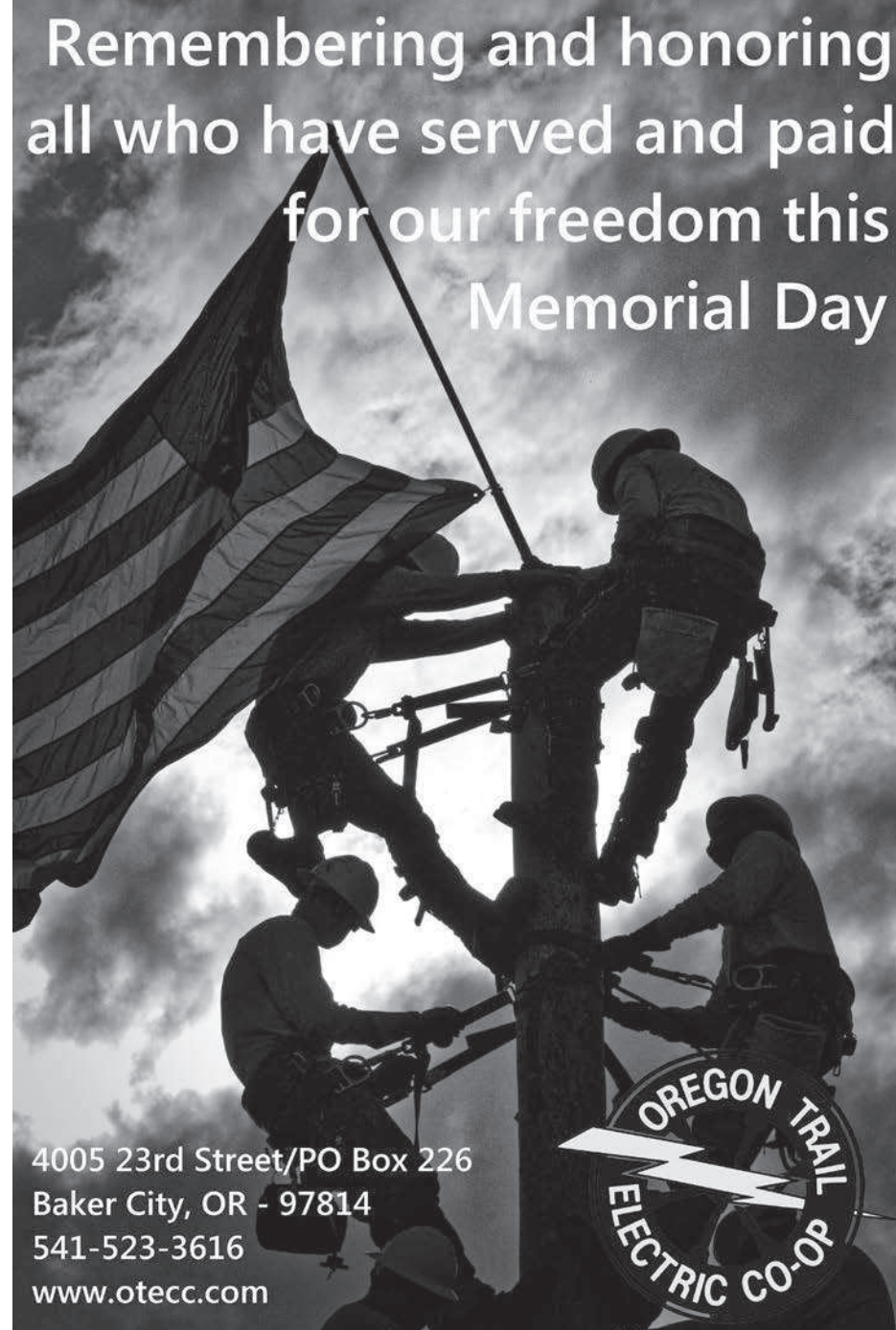
When deputies arrived, they were met on the front porch by Beauford. Deputies advised him that the court order required that he leave the residence. At this time, Beauford became agitated and attempted to flee into the residence. A brief struggle ensued. Deputies were able to gain control and place Beauford in handcuffs. There were no injuries sustained during the altercation.

Beauford was transported to the Baker County Jail and charged with Violation of a Restraining Order and Resisting Arrest.

Transportation commission to meet

The North East Area Commission on Transportation will hold its next meeting on June 1 from 9 a.m. to noon at the Oregon Department of Transportation Region 5 Headquarters located at 3012 Island Avenue, La Grande, Oregon. The general public is invited to attend. The meeting location is accessible to persons with disabilities, per the Americans with Disabilities Act. Questions: 1-877-336-6368.

Remembering and honoring
all who have served and paid
for our freedom this
Memorial Day



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