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WEEKEND EDITION
Vol. 109, No. 47

75 cents
2 Sections, 20 Pages



Hood River News

Official Newspaper, City of Hood River and Hood River County

HOOD RIVER, OREGON ■ SATURDAY, JUNE 13, 2015

www.hoodrivernews.com

Teen rescues Punchbowl Falls swimmer

Barros honored as 'Crag Rat for the day'

By PATRICK MULVIHILL
News staff writer

It was a big week for Claudia Barros — the 17-year-old graduated from high school Friday and saved a woman from drowning near Punchbowl Falls Sunday.

Barros, a Hood River Valley High School international student from Chile, was hiking with a friend on Eagle Creek Trail on June 7 when she came across a woman swimming in Eagle Creek near Punchbowl Falls, a popular waterfall and swimming area on the West edge of Hood River County.

The woman asked Barros to snap a picture of her swimming, so Barros obliged — but the stranger's swimming abilities turned out to be questionable at best. Barros described her technique as "dog swimming" with a great deal of arm-flailing.

Barros took the pictures as asked. But the woman quickly grew tired and clung to a rock wall for support. She hung to the outcropping of mossy rock for several minutes, several yards from shore. Barros and her friend called

to check on the woman, but she had fallen silent.

Barros asked her friend, whom she chose not to name, if he could swim out and to help her. He responded, "I'm not a good swimmer."

Barros dove in instead.

"I jumped into the water (and swam) to where she was ... I had to wrap her in my arm and swim with the other arm. I was tired. It's a good thing I have a strong arm because she was kind of not too skinny," said Barros.

The woman didn't lose consciousness, but she was too tired to swim with her own power. Also a contributing factor was the deceptively low water temperature, which Barros called "super cold."

When Barros and the woman reached shore, her friend helped pull the woman into the sun, where she lay until she recovered under its warmth.

The lady thanked Barros — not just for the pictures, but for saving her life.

Barros said she never learned the name of the woman she rescued, but she estimated her age to be about 35.

Paul Thompson of the Hood River Rotary Club heard about the rescue from his friend, Tim Mayer, who's daughter Erin that went to

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Photo by Patrick Mulvihill

CLAUDIA BARROS, who rescued a swimmer near Punchbowl Falls, shares her story with the Hood River Rotary Club at the Columbia Gorge Inn Thursday afternoon.

Fire destroys home, former hotel in Biggs Junction

Associated Press/The Dalles Chronicle

A fire that started in Biggs Junction Wednesday afternoon burned 1,000 acres, including two structures, and was carried east some three miles towards Rufus on high winds.

Shawn Payne, Sherman County Emergency Services Director, says a state fire marshal's investigation has determined the former hotel fire was human caused but unintentional, possibly started by a cigarette.

Firefighters were able to protect two other homes east of Biggs. "One of the homes, it was black all the way around the house. The firefighters did an awesome job saving those homes," Payne said. The burned home unfortunately had a lot of high grass around it and didn't have a defensible space, she said.

The fire is contained and a crew stayed on during the night doing mop up, she said.

The house that burned Wednesday in Biggs Junction

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Downtown Hood River brush fire — see A11.



Photo courtesy of Sherman County Emergency Services.

A Wednesday fire at Biggs Junction scorched 1,000 acres, including two structures, and was carried east three miles towards Rufus by strong winds.

Parkdale murder case going to grand jury

By PATRICK MULVIHILL
News staff writer

Two brothers suspected of killing a Parkdale man who disappeared in 2014 are facing a grand jury hearing. One of the brothers appeared in court Wednesday.

Donald Michael Schneider, 22, appeared before Judge Karen Ostrey at the Hood River County Courthouse via video from jail on Wednesday, June 10. His attorney, Peter A. Parnickis of Bend, called in via phone.

Parnickis said he would travel to Hood River when Schneider is arraigned on a grand jury indictment — thus far, the Schneider brothers have only appeared in court on "information of felony" charges, said District Attorney John Sewell. The formal arraignment was tentatively set for Mon-

day, depending on if the Schneider's grand jury hearing was held Friday, as planned.

"I will be appearing in person for that arraignment," said Parnickis. "Today was a status check. It is my understanding the state is taking the case to grand jury this Friday."

Brothers Donald Mathew Schneider, 22, Michael David Schneider, 27, and Peter Damien Schneider, 23, of Parkdale were arraigned on felony charges last Thursday in connection with the May 2014 disappearance of Jason R. Muschaweck, 24.

Muschaweck went missing on May 5 last year from his home at 7390 Clear Creek Road in Parkdale. More than a year later, the Schneider brothers were arrested

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Spotlight

A weekly series about a day in the life ...

Cruz Torres enjoys busy, social aspect at The Boys

BY TRISHA WALKER
News staff writer

Life is busy for Cruz Torres, but you wouldn't know it from his easygoing demeanor.

He laughs and talks with customers at The Boys Pine Grove Grocery, located on Highway 35, whether he's pumping gas or serving chicken strips.

It comes naturally, he said — he's just a cheerful guy. Torres works as a gas station attendant at The Boys, a business owned and operated by his family, the Dominguez's. Born and raised in Pine Grove, Torres graduated from Hood River Valley High School in 1997, but lived in Florida the past 15 years.

"I went looking for love and money — now she's gone and I'm broke," he joked.

He's been back in town for about two months, and has found that, while much has changed, a lot has stayed the same.

"Hood River has grown exponentially," Torres said. "A lot has developed. At the same time, not a lot has changed. There are still a lot of locals."

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Photos by Trisha Walker

CRUZ TORRES works as a gas attendant and clerk at The Boys Pine Grove Grocery. Someday, he'd like to open his own food cart. But for now, he keeps more than busy helping customers, like Bernie FitzSimons of Odell, with their gas and grocery needs.

Four To Go

Heritage Council seeks volunteers

The Hood River County Heritage Council is accepting applications for volunteer council members. The mission of the Heritage Council, a 501c3 nonprofit, is to support the ongoing operations of The History Museum of Hood River County. Applications are available at the History Museum, by emailing the Heritage Council at heritagecouncil@gmail.com, or calling the museum at 541-386-6772.



Historic Highway Committee meets June 23

The Historic Columbia River Highway Advisory Committee will meet on June 23 from 10 a.m. to noon at the Community Center in Cascade Locks Marine Park.

- The meeting highlights include:
- An open discussion about congestion along the Historic Highway
 - 100-year anniversary countdown begins — 2016 Celebration update (countdown has begun from the June 7, 1916 dedication of the highway)
 - Historic Columbia River Highway State Trail development update

KB4C benefit returns July 10-12

The 9th annual Kiteboarding4Cancer kicks off with an all-ages party at Oak Street Pub (formerly British Pub) at Fourth and Oak on July 10, with a DJ, fire dancers, and more (admission \$5) and gets going on July 11 with the signature event, the Kite Derby at 10:15 a.m. The community is urged to come see 200 or so kites take off across the Columbia.

For details on KB4C events, to sign up to volunteer, or make a donation, go to kiteboarding4cancer.org.

County Fair Books available soon

Want to know what to do at the Hood River County Fair? How to enter an art, horticulture or vegetable? What's going on with music, horse events, and FFA and 4-H judging?

The 2015 Hood River County Fair Book is your best resource.

Look for it starting next week at locations in Hood River, Parkdale, Odell, and Cascade Locks.

