

# MONTWHEELER: State psychiatrist concluded he was mentally fit to stand trial

Continued from 1A

while fleeing from police Jan. 9. He is scheduled to plead to the charges next week in Malheur County Circuit Court.

The records don't fully explain how a man with a high school education could for decades maintain a façade of mental illness before a series of psychiatrists and psychologists. They do show medical professionals considered him potentially dangerous and warned he needed close supervision if released into the community.

The Security Review Board, however, said it had no authority to impose supervision or any limits on Montwheeler when he was freed in December.

Officials at the Security Review Board and the Oregon State Hospital have declined to discuss Montwheeler, citing patient confidentiality.

But the documents chronicle the struggle of medical professionals treating Montwheeler as mentally ill when he exhibited no symptoms. In some instances, they gave him the wrong medications and at the wrong dosages.

Professionals at the state hospital subsequently concluded that Montwheeler wasn't ill and had been "improperly" put under the control of the Security Review Board, according to the state documents.

With Montwheeler, the public is getting a rare glimpse into how the state handles someone who successfully asserts an insanity defense to criminal charges. The Security

Review Board historically has maintained that its files are confidential and not open to the public, but was ordered by the Oregon Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum and Governor Kate Brown to turn the files over to the *Malheur Enterprise*.

Montwheeler ended up in state jurisdiction after a 1996 standoff with police in Baker City. Police reports say Montwheeler kidnapped his then-wife and 3-year-old son, threatening to kill them and himself.

After his arrest, the state records show, a state psychiatrist concluded Montwheeler was mentally fit to stand trial. Montwheeler's attorney retained Salem psychiatrist John Cochran to provide a second opinion.

Cochran recounted how Montwheeler was raised by an aunt and uncle in Halfway after his mother was murdered by his father in 1974. He married in Guam while in the Marine Corps, a marriage he said lasted just weeks. It was a pending separation from his second wife that led to the Baker City standoff.

Cochran said Montwheeler "does meet the test for being guilty except for insanity" and that he "does not appear to be malingering."

In his April 30, 1997, evaluation, Cochran noted Montwheeler's statements that he heard voices, including that of his murdered mother and of a friend he said he watched die in the Marine Corps. (Contacted recently, Cochran said he did not recall the case.)

Montwheeler testified last

December none of that was true.

The recently released records quote Montwheeler's statements explaining how, he said, his attorney orchestrated that second opinion, which was relied on by a state judge to put Montwheeler under the Security Review Board.

"He said his defense attorney had an assessment done because 'she said the state hospital is safer than going to prison.' Mr. Montwheeler said that the first assessment 'said there is nothing wrong with me.' Then his attorney told him not to worry because she would find another psychologist," according to an Oct. 26, 2015, memo by a social worker.

State hospital employees said Montwheeler told them his attorney gave him a medical reference book and "coached him well on how to act as if he had a mental illness," according to a risk review dated last Oct. 25. Montwheeler said his attorney told him he would be out of the state hospital in six months instead of facing seven years in prison.

A state psychiatrist wrote in December 1997 that Montwheeler remained a danger because he couldn't explain the kidnapping.

Dr. Charles Faulk said there was a "reasonable medical probability that the patient may have simulated symptoms in order to avoid the prison system," according to his report.

Faulk said there were no symptoms of mental illness, making it "difficult, if impossible, to find just what and

how to treat."

The Security Review Board had that report at a January 1998 hearing involving Montwheeler, its records show.

Seven years later, another psychiatrist wrote that Montwheeler's "unusual course of illness does open the possibility of malingering." That report contains no recommendation to act on that possibility.

By 2016, hospital professionals concluded Montwheeler wasn't bipolar as diagnosed. A hospital psychologist wrote in July 15, 2016, that Montwheeler "repeatedly" asserted that he wasn't mentally ill.

"This is consistent with the opinion of multiple members of his treatment team," the psychologist wrote.

A hospital risk review team report last October said that Montwheeler was "misdiagnosed with bipolar disorder and had never received appropriate treatment for bipolar disorder."

Dr. Mukesh Mittal, a hospital psychiatrist, separately said in patient progress notes dated last Nov. 8 that Montwheeler's bipolar diagnosis "has not been validated in a clinical setting."

Still, medical professionals treated Montwheeler for years, the records show. At one time, he was prescribed medication that, according to hospital records, "is not a recognized treatment for bipolar disorder."

*Republished with permission from Malheur Enterprise.*

# LINDSAY: Current term expires in 2019

Continued from 1A

irrigation came along, was nothing more than a speck of desert along the Columbia River.

The Port of Morrow was established in 1959, the same year Lindsay graduated from the University of Portland and was commissioned by the U.S. Air Force. From there, Lindsay went on to study at Georgetown Law in Washington, D.C., where he planned to go into military intelligence.

That all changed the night his father, Alex, suffered a heart attack and died at the age of 44. It was Lindsay's first night back home after his first year in law school.

"That changed everything," he said.

Though Lindsay did go on to serve a year of active duty in the Air Force, he ultimately decided to return to Morrow County to run the family ranch south of Boardman. He was later appointed to the port commission and has been elected 12 consecutive times since then.

Lindsay can recall the early days when port officials fretted over paying back \$500 loans, as opposed to luring multi-million dollar developments. He attributes much of their success to hiring Neal as general manager.

"I can assure you we have the best port manager in the United States," he said.

Fellow commissioners Jerry Healy and Marv Padberg described Lindsay as relatively quiet, but when he does speak, everyone stops to listen.

"There's only one way to get that kind of wisdom, and that's to pay your dues. And he has paid his dues," Padberg said.

Don Russell, a former port commissioner and

**"There's only one way to get that kind of wisdom, and that's to pay your dues. And he has paid his dues."**

**— Marv Padberg,**  
port commissioner

current county commissioner, said the county's total value has doubled from \$2 billion to \$4 billion over the past two years, largely due to the port hitting its stride as an industrial engine.

"There are a lot of jobs in Morrow County thanks to the port commission," Russell said. "That's only going to continue into the future."

Lindsay also received letters of congratulations from Republican state Rep. Greg Smith and U.S. Congressman Greg Walden, praising his ability to find middle ground and common-sense solutions. Lindsay's son, Dan, who also works at the family ranch, said the success of the port has been a huge source of pride for his dad.

"It's been a huge part of his life," he said. "I know it's given him a great sense of accomplishment."

Not everything has gone the port's way, Lindsay said. Most recently, he lamented the loss of the Coyote Island coal export terminal, which he said could have been their best project to date. However, he said the port has always seemed to come out ahead.

"He's not done yet either," Neal added with a smile.

Lindsay's current term expires in 2019.

*Contact George Plaven at gplaven@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0825.*

# CLUB: Cumulative giving will amount to \$1M by end of the year

Continued from 1A

raised money by selling baked goods, pizza and raffle tickets. Club president Abby Rinehart sent emails and letters to organizations that fit the mission.

Eleven proposals came back, asking for \$500 to \$5,000. The majority of the organizations help the homeless in some way, while the others focus on scholarship opportunities. This month, as club members conducted interviews and site visits, their minds were blown.

"It's been very eye-opening for the students," Gregg said. "It's been eye-opening for me."

The scale of homelessness in Pendleton shocked the students as they listened to applicants talk about needs of the people they serve.

"What surprised me the most was seeing just how many homeless people are in our community," said Annalie Oertwich, the club publicist. "Driving around, you might see a person standing on the corner and think they're the only one in town, but there are hundreds of them all over Pendleton."

Many youth also experience homelessness and hunger, they learned.

"I didn't realize how many students here in our school are homeless," said Kale'a Broker, the club's vice-president.

Club president Abby Rinehart feels that homelessness needs to come out of the shadows.



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

**Pastor Chris Clemons talks about the needs of the Neighbor 2 Neighbor Warming Station with members of the Pendleton High School CommuniCare club, from left, Abby Rinehart, Emily Rinehart, Dani Larios and advisor Jill Gregg, an improvised collection system for a leak in the roof at the on Tuesday in Pendleton.**

showing them the sleeping areas, kitchen, intake area, dining room, laundry room and storage area. The little group listened intently, soaking in the place and noticing the tarps hanging from the ceiling to collect rainwater that seeps through a leaky roof. The water flowed through plastic tubing to buckets below.

The warming station has applied for funding from a larger grantor that could finance a new roof. Bunk beds are coming soon, courtesy of CAPECO. Those bunkbeds need sheets, though, and the teens will ponder whether the club will fund the \$700 needed to buy fitted and flat sheets for the new beds.

Deciding which grant proposals to fund won't be simple.

"Going into this, I thought wow, \$8,000, that's a lot of money," Oertwich said. "But then we started looking at proposals and doing site visits. It'll be hard to choose which people need it the most."

"Everyone needs help," Broker said.

The CommuniCare program started about 20 years ago, spearheaded by the Harold and Arlene Schnitzer CARE Foundation's Barbara Hall, the foundation's executive director. Starting in Portland's Grant High School, the program ramped up to 12 schools this

year. Most are in the Portland metropolitan area, but there are now programs in Pendleton and Astoria.

"The Schnitzer family has strong connections in these areas," Hall said.

Hall said she originally championed the program as a way to "encourage young people to give back." She also realized that most teens with whom she talked had little knowledge of nonprofits, which she considers the third leg of a societal stool that also includes business and government.

"They don't understand the card that nonprofits play," Hall said. "The third leg fills the gaps. When the students get this, they experience this aha moment."

According to Hall, cumulative giving by the student foundations will amount to \$1 million by the end of the year.

Gregg hopes the lessons of this foundation work will stick with her students.

"My goal in running this club is to expose students to the nonprofit community in hopes that they'll want to get more involved with local organizations and be positive contributing citizens of their community after they graduate high school and enter adulthood."

*Contact Kathy Aney at kaney@eastoregonian.com or call 541-966-0810.*

Friday  
Meals



April 14th from 5 to 7:00 p.m.  
@ the St. Anthony Hospital Blue Mountain Cafe

**Cedar Wrapped Salmon - \$7.50/Adults**  
**- \$7.00/Children & Seniors**  
with Rice Pilaf & Buttered Green Beans

**Baked Potato Bar - \$4.00/with toppings**  
All you can eat.

**Salmon/Potato Bar Combo - \$11.50**

**Clam Chowder Bread Bowl - \$4.25**  
Single Cup \$1.25



**CHI St. Anthony Hospital**  
2801 St. Anthony Way, Pendleton, OR 97801

HAMLEY STEAKHOUSE

Easter  
PRIME RIB  
Buffet

Sunday APRIL 16 10am-2pm  
Featuring

SLOW ROASTED PRIME RIB CARVING STATION  
HONEY MAPLE HAM  
ROASTED RED POTATOES  
FRESH GREEN BEANS WITH BACON & BUTTER  
CHICKEN BUNKHOUSE PENNE PASTA  
WHISKEY MEATBALLS  
FESTIVE SCRAMBLED EGGS  
APPLEWOOD SMOKED BACON AND SAUSAGE  
HAMLEY BISCUITS AND SAUSAGE GRAVY  
CHEESE BLINTZES WITH BERRY SAUCE  
SEASONAL FRESH FRUIT SALAD  
HAMLEY CAESAR SALAD  
HAMLEY CRANBERRY SPINACH SALAD  
HOT ROLLS & BUTTER  
ASSORTED DESSERTS

ALL YOU CAN EAT  
\$26 per person \$16 kids 5-12

CALL TODAY FOR RESERVATIONS  
541.278.1100 OPTION 2  
COURT & MAIN, PENDLETON