

Actor Jim Belushi's happy place is growing pot in Oregon

By DAMIAN MANN
The Mail Tribune

MEDFORD — Jim Belushi has a lifetime of memories shaped by cannabis.

When he talks about Oregon's favorite weed, he reflects on his family, the fun times at "Saturday Night Live" and, yeah, his rocking 2018 harvest party.

The famous actor, singer and community supporter describes a spiritual connection to the marijuana he's growing on his 93-acre spread near Eagle Point, known as the Belushi Farm, and its 22,000-square-foot state licensed grow.

He's even got "Captain Jack" on board cultivating from seed the same strain of "Afghanica" that he provided to help inspire the cast and writers of "Saturday Night Live" — dubbed "the smell of SNL." Captain Jack, as he likes to be called, went to Afghanistan in the 1970s to bring back the special seeds that produce a strain enjoyed by Belushi.

"Where do you think Coneheads came from? That weed," said the 64-year-old Belushi, his voice hoarse from singing at his party last weekend. The Coneheads depicted



Jamie Lusch/The Medford Mail Tribune via AP

Jim Belushi checks out a plant at his pot farm on the Rogue River near Eagle Point. The famous actor, singer and community supporter describes a spiritual connection to the marijuana he's growing on his 93-acre spread near Eagle Point, known as the Belushi Farm, and its 22,000-square-foot state licensed grow.

an alien family with cones for heads that was a popular skit on "SNL" in the 1970s.

Belushi started his cannabis enterprise three years ago with a 48-plant medical marijuana grow that has expanded into the greenhouses, equipment and manpower to compete in an ever-changing cannabis industry. He's undergoing a brand change from Rogue's Lair to Belushi's Private Vault.

He has painstakingly restored old barns and outbuildings, and built a dramatic timber-framed house with views of the Rogue River.

Besides a wide-ranging career, Belushi has lent his name to restoring historical buildings in the valley, including the Butte Creek Mill in Eagle Point and the Holly Theatre in Medford.

With his ever-present stogie dangling from his

mouth, Belushi jokes that his day job pays for this latest venture.

Belushi and other local cannabis growers have invested heavily in this new industry, watching with concern in a market glutted with product and plummeting prices.

"It's worrying everyone," Belushi said.

But the worrying went out the window last week-end for his harvest party.

"We had 500 guests, and 490 of them were smoking," he said with a grin.

Belushi's Private Vault is being sold at dispensaries in Southern Oregon, and the label will feature his 1,200 pounds of premium quality flower, including Captain Jack's Gulzar Afghanica and Belushi's favorite, Cherry Pie, which he said makes him a better husband.

"It's the marriage counselor," he joked.

Captain Jack said he collected the seeds from Afghanistan and brought them back to the states for cultivation. While many growers prefer to clone plants, Captain Jack grows from seed.

"Most other people have gone in a different direction and hybridized," he said.

Captain Jack describes his plant as having a very wide leaf, joking that it resembles cabbage leaves.

"I defy most people on this planet to tell me it's a pot plant," he said.

When Belushi talks about marijuana, he often mentions his brother, John Belushi, who died in 1982 after a battle with drugs and was known for his outrageous comedic abilities.

"I wish we'd known then about marijuana being

a medicine," Belushi said.

He remembers his older brother practicing for his role as Samurai, trying to get the character just right while swinging a sword.

"He would literally exercise his eyebrows in front of a mirror," he said.

Belushi thinks a lot about his mother and father, both of Albanian descent, who raised him in Chicago.

"It's funny, the older I get the more I miss them," he said. "I miss my dad more than anything, especially being out on the farm. He would have liked riding horses. He had a little ranch up in Julian, California."

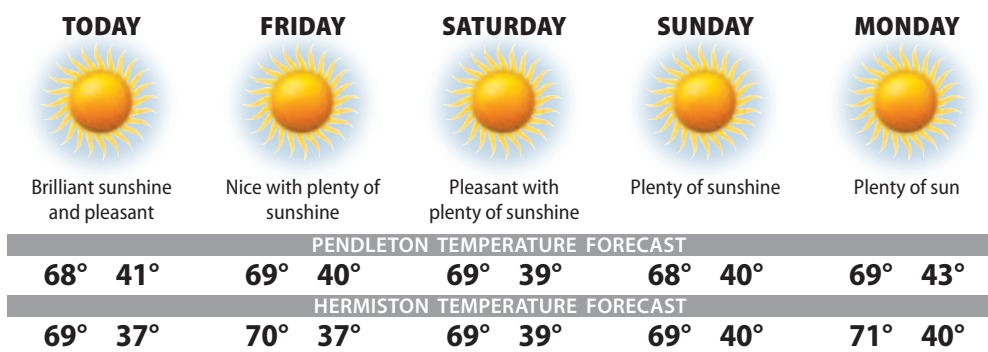
Belushi has a lot of different views about the benefits of marijuana as medicine and his own personal relationship with it.

He likens his affinity to cannabis to the way flowers attract bees, and some flowers will actually enclose their petals around the bee to help it extract as much pollen as possible.

"I feel like that bee that is brought in and held until I get everything about it," Belushi said. "It has come really deep into my heart, my body and my spiritual nature. It's brought me to the medicine. It's brought me full circle to my brother John."

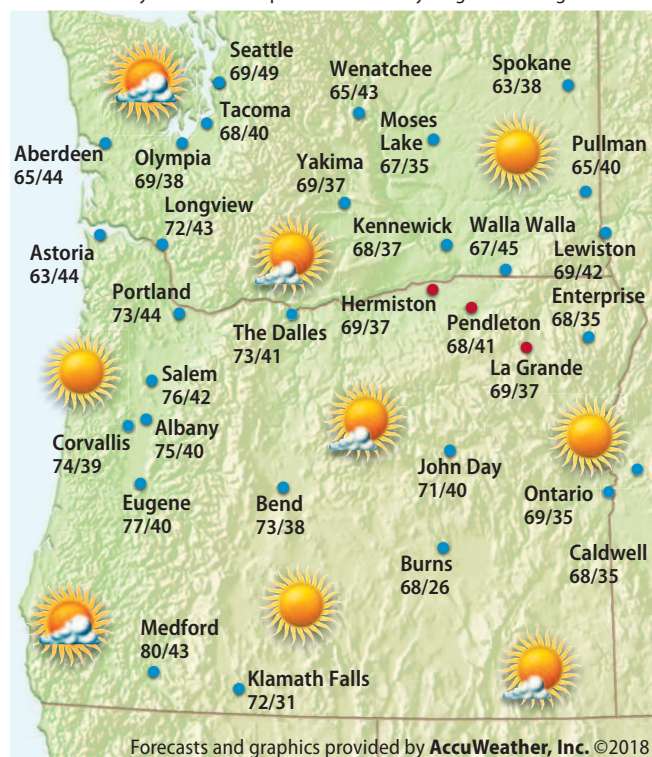
Forecast for Pendleton Area

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OREGON FORECAST

Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.



ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	63°	36°
Normals	63°	39°
Records	82° (2003)	23° (1897)

PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"
Month to date	1.39"
Normal month to date	0.56"
Year to date	7.91"
Last year to date	12.55"
Normal year to date	9.50"

HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	63°	32°
Normals	65°	38°
Records	80° (2003)	20° (1948)

PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"
Month to date	1.14"
Normal month to date	0.30"
Year to date	6.29"
Last year to date	7.19"
Normal year to date	6.86"

WINDS (in mph)

	Today	Fri.
Boardman	S 3-6	NE 3-6
Pendleton	NW 4-8	NNW 4-8

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today	7:15 a.m.
Sunset tonight	6:04 p.m.
Moonrise today	3:45 p.m.
Moonset today	12:47 a.m.

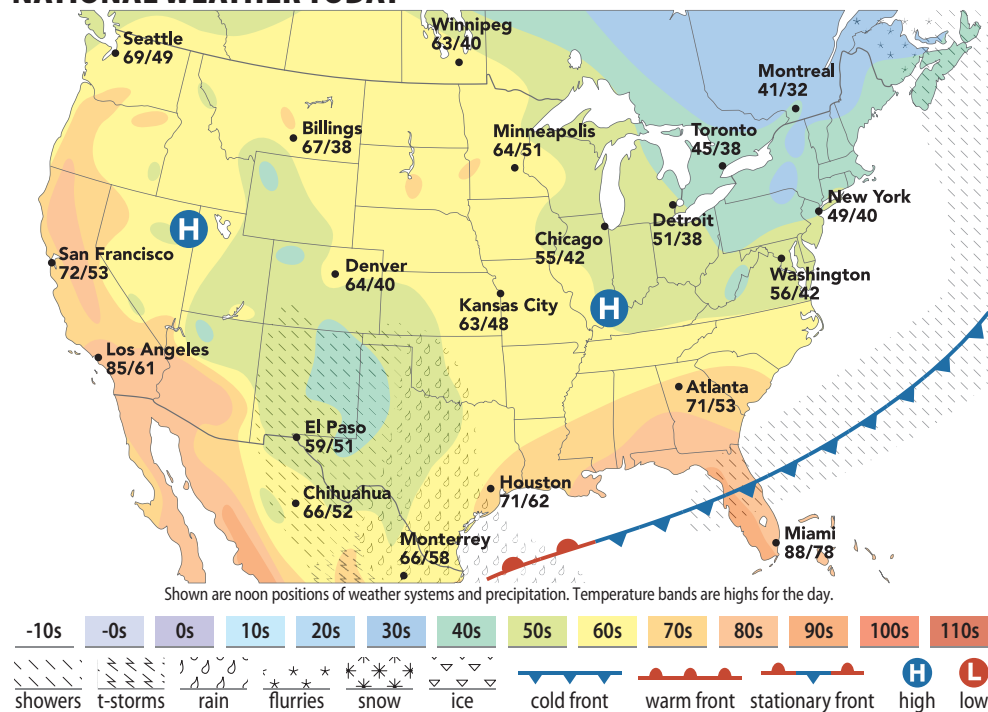


NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)

High 95° in Tampa, Fla. Low -1° in Dillon, Colo.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



BRIEFLY

Homeless woman sues city over anti-camping ordinance

GRANTS PASS (AP) — A class-action lawsuit claims the city of Grants Pass is running homeless people out of town, violating their constitutional rights.

The Oregonian/OregonLive reports the suit, filed Monday by plaintiff Debra Blake, alleges the city's anti-camping ordinance and criminal trespass laws represent cruel and unusual punishment and are selectively enforced against the homeless population, violating their Eighth and 14th Amendment rights.

Blake, identified in the suit as "an involuntarily homeless resident," says the only shelters in the city are nearly always full.

Blake says Grants Pass police often tell her to "move along," and she has faced repeated fines for sleeping in an alley or for prohibited camping.

Blake argues there's no alternative housing or shelters where she can stay.

Grants Pass attorney Mark Bartholomew and Mayor Darin Fowler did not immediately return messages for comment.

Police: Man ambushes firefighters as they fight blaze

SPRINGFIELD (AP) — Authorities say a 60-year-old man in Springfield ambushed firefighters who showed up to put out a blaze at a house in a residential neighborhood before he turned the gun on himself.

Springfield police Lt. Scott McKee tells The Register Guard Wednesday that police believe the man set the fire, and then began shooting at firefighters when they showed up.

McKee says the suspect had the firefighters pinned down behind their truck as the blaze spread to three other homes.

A police officer who was under fire and hiding behind a car had to be rescued by an armored vehicle.

Three homes were destroyed and a fourth damaged.

No residents were hurt.

It's not immediately clear if the man lived in one of the houses that burned.

Oregon dog survives getting lost, shot in forest

PORTLAND (AP) — An 8-year-old husky is recovering after being lost for two weeks in the Mount Hood wilderness, getting shot and possibly chewing off its own injured leg.

KATU-TV reports Hatcher was found Monday suffering from severe injuries.

Hatcher disappeared Sept. 29 when



AP Photo/Don Ryan

A person dressed as a Tyrannosaurus rex holds a sign during a rally by Oregon Democratic Gov. Kate Brown in Portland on Wednesday. Wednesday was the first day that ballots went out in the mail for Oregon's vote-by-mail election.

Shae Kosmalski took him and 14 other sled dogs on a trip to Frog Lake from Southern Oregon.

Hatcher somehow got away from the pack, prompting an intensive search.

Kosmalski eventually returned home, but a volunteer found the dog Monday about 5 miles from where Hatcher was lost.

The dog was taken to VCA Southeast Portland Animal Hospital where a vet said it seemed Hatcher had been shot in the leg and that Hatcher likely had chewed off what was remaining of it.

Hatcher is expected to fully recover.

Ballots go out to Oregonians for midterm election

PORTLAND (AP) — Wednesday marked the first day that ballots were being mailed to Oregonians for the Nov. 6 election.

Oregon's vote-by-mail system means that ballots must be mailed well ahead of election day.

Ballots will be distributed by the U.S. Postal Service to registered voters until Oct. 22.

Voters can return their ballots by mail or drop them in designated ballot boxes by 8 p.m. on Nov. 6.

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