

Union County homicide case gets a surprise

Artist recreates face of murdered mystery woman

By PHIL WRIGHT
EO Media Group

LA GRANDE — The team working to solve the homicide of a Jane Doe near Elgin stretching back more than 40 years received a surprise last Saturday — images showing their mystery woman’s face.

Melinda Jederberg of La Grande, who is heading up the individuals dedicated to identifying the woman, recalled staring into that face and her eyes.

“I got goose bumps,” she said. “I got a little bit teary-eyed — a little bit — and I’m not the only one.”

The face of the Finley Creek Jane Doe came about when team member Jason Futch of Florida reached out to Anthony Redgrave of Massachusetts. Futch, who operates a podcast on cold cases, asked his friend if he would try to recreate what the woman may have looked like.

“He joined our little work group and is providing his services free of charge,” Jederberg said.

Redgrave operates Red-

grave Research Forensic Services. He has been doing this work for about a year and half, he said, and comes from a fine arts background. He explained the profession debates whether to call the work facial “reconstruction” or “approximation,” but he goes with “forensic art.” Having a good piece of forensic art, he said, can make a significant difference in identifying someone.

“People recognize faces, and characteristics carry across families,” Redgrave said.

Recreating the face, however, took some creativity. Redgrave had no actual skull to work with, just the digital copies of the photos the Oregon State medical examiner took of the remains after hunters found them in August 1978 in a shallow grave on an embankment of Finley Creek. And these photos were not direct shots of a forward-facing skull.

“The angles were really horrible,” he said. “Sometimes medical examiners will take horrible photos of remains.”

He tapped into his arts



Jane Doe



Melinda Jederberg shows notes she has taken while working to identify the woman that hunters found in a shallow grave in 1978 near Elgin.

background to draft lines of perspectives based on the images, he said, eventually leading to a three-dimensional rendering of the skull. He also credited biological anthropologist Amy Michael, who teaches at the University of New Hampshire and works with Redgrave Research Forensic Services. She provides guidance on ethnicity and age of the faces he brings to life.

From there, he said, recreating faces takes about four

or five hours, and this case was no different. He said he is a night owl and started the project at 2:30 a.m. Saturday, May 3. Later that morning, he sent the team members the video he made showing the face, including the superimposition that shows how the skull fits inside the face. He said that lets him check the work to make sure skull and facial angles line up.

Jederberg said she was shocked, surprised and impressed with the work.

But she did not immediately push the images to the public via the Facebook page for the case, Finley Creek Jane Doe — Elgin, OR. Instead, the team arranged a video conference Tuesday with Dr. Veronica “Nici” Vance, forensic anthropologist for the Oregon State Medical Examiner’s Office.

Jederberg said that meeting proved invaluable. Vance entered Jane Doe’s image into the state’s database for missing people, Jederberg

said, and Vance told the crew she would work on tracking down the cremains. After the medical examiner’s office wrapped up its work on the case all those years ago, state police shipped the bones to a crematorium in Walla Walla, Washington, where the paper trail went cold for Jederberg.

Vance, however, carries the kind of clout that could open news doors leading to the recovery of the cremains and the distant possibility of extracting DNA.

“That’s where we’re standing right now,” Jederberg said.

The group on Tuesday posted Redgrave’s forensic art on the Facebook page. Jederberg said overnight the page received roughly a hundred new followers.

“We’ve got all kinds of people saying, ‘Could it be this person?’” she said.

Followers said they are combing through images on public databases of missing people looking for possible matches to the image of a slender-faced woman with big eyes. Redgrave said this is one of the reasons he does what he does.

Even if people don’t recognize the face of a stranger, he said, they care more about a stranger once they see their face.

Forecast for Pendleton Area

TODAY

Cooler with rain and a t-storm

WEDNESDAY

Some sun, then turning cloudy

THURSDAY

Mostly cloudy, a shower or two

FRIDAY

Partly sunny

SATURDAY

Increasing clouds and warmer

PENDLETON TEMPERATURE FORECAST				
65°	46°	67°	47°	64°
46°		47°		45°

HERMISTON TEMPERATURE FORECAST				
70°	49°	73°	50°	70°
49°		50°		48°

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OREGON FORECAST

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

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ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	68°	48°
Normals	70°	46°
Records	98° (1931)	28° (1911)

PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.04"
Month to date	0.41"
Normal month to date	0.41"
Year to date	5.57"
Last year to date	7.76"
Normal year to date	5.56"

HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	76°	54°
Normals	72°	45°
Records	95° (1993)	29° (1999)

PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"
Month to date	0.21"
Normal month to date	0.43"
Year to date	0.72"
Last year to date	3.88"
Normal year to date	4.45"

WINDS (in mph)

	Today	Wed.
Boardman	WSW 7-14	WSW 8-16
Pendleton	SW 7-14	WSW 7-14

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today	5:27 a.m.
Sunset tonight	8:16 p.m.
Moonrise today	1:12 a.m.
Moonset today	10:05 a.m.

Last

New

First

Full

May 14

May 22

May 29

June 5

NATIONAL EXTREMES

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

High 101° in Blythe, Calif. Low 14° in Culbertson, Mont.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY

Shown are noon positions of weather systems and precipitation. Temperature bands are highs for the day.

-10s

-0s

0s

10s

20s

30s

40s

50s

60s

70s

80s

90s

100s

110s

showers

t-storms

rain

flurries

snow

ice

cold front

warm front

stationary front

high

low

Baker Technical Institute gets grant to clean up historic school

By CHRIS COLLINS
EO Media Group

BAKER CITY — Baker Technical Institute has been awarded a \$500,000 federal grant for its Brownfields Program to continue work to clean up the historic Central School building in Baker City.

The grant award was discussed during a half-hour conference call last week that included representatives of BTI, members of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Region 10 Brownfields Team, Oregon Business and the local media.

BTI was represented by its president, Doug Dalton, and Sandy Mitchell, marketing coordinator. Dalton explained how BTI, a career and technical training center that is part of Baker High School, developed its Brownfields Program.

What began as an environmental science class with an emphasis on cleaning polluted properties in Baker

City about six years ago has developed into a nationally recognized program.

It now includes a partnership with Eastern Oregon University, which will begin offering a Sustainable Rural Systems degree to its students in September, Dalton said.

Science teacher Robbie Langrell oversees the BTI program.

“Students who were here at the time helped write this grant and led community meetings,” Dalton said. “Now, with the EOU partnership, we’re looking at other projects in the Eastern Oregon community.”

The \$500,000 EPA grant to BTI, most of which will be used to clean up contaminants at the former Central School building at 2425 Washington Ave., built in 1917, was one of five grants totaling \$2.65 million awarded to Oregon communities.

Most of the contamination at the site consists of

materials used to construct the building, such as asbestos and lead-based paint, with some amount of PCB in light fixtures, Dalton said.

The money also will be used for community outreach activities to help determine a future use for the building. Both high school and college students will participate with project consultants in that work, Dalton said.

Tim Hamlin is the director of the EPA’s Region 10 Land Chemicals and Redevelopment Division, which includes Oregon, Idaho, Washington and Alaska and has its headquarters in Seattle. Hamlin also attended Thursday’s meeting by telephone.

Hamlin said the goal is to clean up and redevelop properties, which leads to job development and economic development in communities.

“The core objective is to put buildings and land where contamination is found back into productive use,” he said.

BRIEFLY

Alleged child mistreatment leads to woman’s arrest

WALLA WALLA, Wash. — A Walla Walla woman appeared Friday in Walla Walla County Superior Court on accusations she neglected to take her burned 3-year-old son to the hospital.

Amanda L. Patton, 28, of Walla Walla, was arrested Thursday afternoon after Walla Walla County Sheriff’s Office deputies investigated reports she might have abused the child.

Child Protective Services agents were searching for Patton. Deputies got involved and found the woman and child at a local convenience store.

Patton told deputies she was on her way to take the boy to the doctor. She also said the boy was involved in another accident but said he wasn’t hurt, so she took him home, according to records.

The boy was taken into protective custody, as it was the second alleged incident within two months with unexplained injuries where the parents hadn’t taken him to the hospital, records stated. He was examined by local doctors, then flown to Harborview Medical Center in Seattle.

Patton was taken to Walla Walla County Jail for investigation of second-degree criminal mistreatment of a child. She was released Friday on conditions, including being on house arrest.

— Walla Walla Union-Bulletin

CORRECTIONS: In the Page A4 editorial “Endorsements for May 19 Primary Election,” published Saturday, May 10, the editorial misstated the ward candidates Sally Brandsen and Melissa Shumake are running to represent. They are running for Ward 2.

The *East Oregonian* works hard to be accurate and sincerely regrets any errors. If you notice a mistake in the paper, please call 541-966-0818.

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