

Recalling a close call with wrong-way driver

By JAYSON JACOBY
Baker City Herald

BAKER CITY — When Terry Bengé saw the silver car speeding straight at him, he scarcely had time to react.

Bengé, who was driving a tow truck, swerved to the shoulder of Interstate 84.

Maybe a second later, the car whizzed past.

Bengé estimates the distance between the car and his truck was a couple feet.

“It was close enough I could tell he was clean-shaven,” Bengé said.

A few miles farther along the freeway, the driver of the silver car, Logan Raye Deuel-Clinkenbeard, 28, collided with an Oregon State Police SUV driven by Sr. Trooper Andrew McClay.

Neither was seriously hurt in the crash, which happened about 2:10 p.m. on Friday, March 12, near Milepost 327, near Durkee about 23 miles east of Baker City.

Deuel-Clinkenbeard, whose address was listed as Missoula, Montana, by the Baker County Jail but who also has a Camas, Washington, address, according to court records, was arrested and charged with second-degree attempted assault, reckless driving and recklessly endangering another person. Baker County Circuit

Court Judge Matt Shirtcliff on Tuesday, March 16, granted Deuel-Clinkenbeard a conditional release. He is required to stay with his father in Montana and to attend a status check hearing, by phone, on April 1.

Bengé, who has worked for Superior Towing in Baker City for about seven months, was driving eastbound, toward Ontario, on March 12.

He said he had just picked up a couple whose car had hit a deer near Milepost 327. He was towing their car to Ontario, and they were riding with him in the tow truck.

Bengé said he was near Ash Grove Cement, where the freeway enters a series of curves in the Burnt River Canyon, when he saw the silver car, traveling west in the eastbound lanes.

The car was rounding a corner when Bengé saw it.

He estimated its speed at more than 90 mph.

“The whole car was lifting to one side from the force,” Bengé said.

After the near collision, Bengé continued east to Ontario to drop off the couple, who are from Washington, and their vehicle.

He said the couple was already “shaken up” from hitting the deer, and the close call with the wrong-way driver added to their anxiety.



Oregon State Police/Contributed Photo/Baker City Herald
A 2011 Toyota Camry driven by Logan Deuel-Clinkenbeard suffered major damage after being hit by an Oregon State Police vehicle while driving the wrong way on I-84.

Bengé said his boss, having heard over a police scanner about Deuel-Clinkenbeard's collision with McClay's patrol SUV, radioed him to tell him what had happened.

Bengé said workers were still cleaning up the scene at Milepost 327 when he was on his way back to Baker City from Ontario.

He ended up towing the

OSP vehicle, which suffered major damage, to Baker City.

Bengé said it was his first encounter with a wrong-way driver on the freeway.

Sgt. Craig Rilee of the Baker County Sheriff's Office, who investigated the case and interviewed both McClay and Bengé, wrote in his report that the Baker County Dispatch Center received more than 35 calls

to 911 about the wrong-way driver.

It's not clear where Deuel-Clinkenbeard started driving the wrong way, but callers reported the silver car driving west in the eastbound lanes starting around Milepost 342, near the Lime exit.

Deuel-Clinkenbeard then drove through the Burnt River Canyon, which is one of the curviest sections of Interstate 84 in Eastern Oregon, and continued through the Durkee Valley toward Baker City.

According to Rilee's report, McClay was driving eastbound near Milepost 327 when he saw, about one-half mile ahead, a vehicle swerve to avoid colliding with a silver car traveling west.

McClay had his emergency lights flashing and his siren blaring.

In his report, Rilee wrote that McClay “was unable to safely maneuver out of the path of the oncoming vehicle so he made the decision to stop the wrong way vehicle from continuing the wrong way. The left front of (McClay's) patrol vehicle collided with the left front of the wrong way vehicle.”

Deuel-Clinkenbeard's Camry stopped in the freeway median, about 50 yards from McClay's vehicle, Rilee wrote.

In his own report, McClay wrote that he “rammed the vehicle to get it off the roadway.”

McClay was not available for an interview because the criminal investigation is ongoing. OSP Capt. Timothy Fox, the state police government and media relations official, wrote in an email to the Baker City Herald.

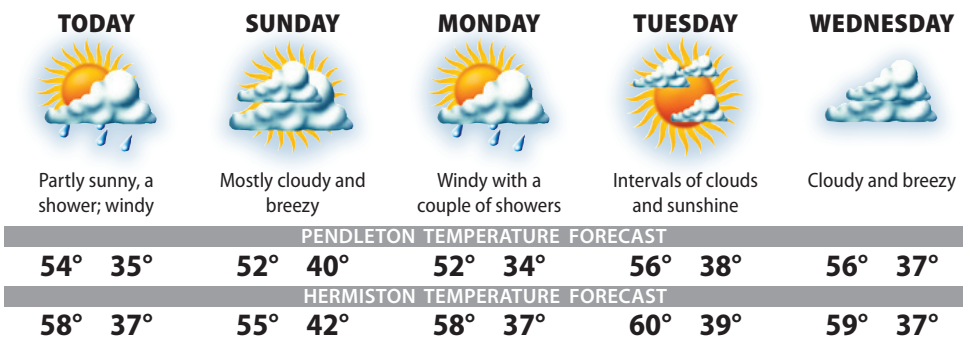
In a document filed on Monday, March 15, in Baker County Circuit Court in support of a motion seeking to release Deuel-Clinkenbeard to either his father or on conditions set by the court, the father said his son has “severe mental health conditions for which we have been seeking treatment.” The document also states that Deuel-Clinkenbeard has no prior criminal history and “needs consistent mental health treatment.”

None of the police reports mentions Deuel-Clinkenbeard being tested for intoxicants.

Fox, the OSP spokesman, said the driver likely wouldn't be tested if he did not show any signs of impairment.

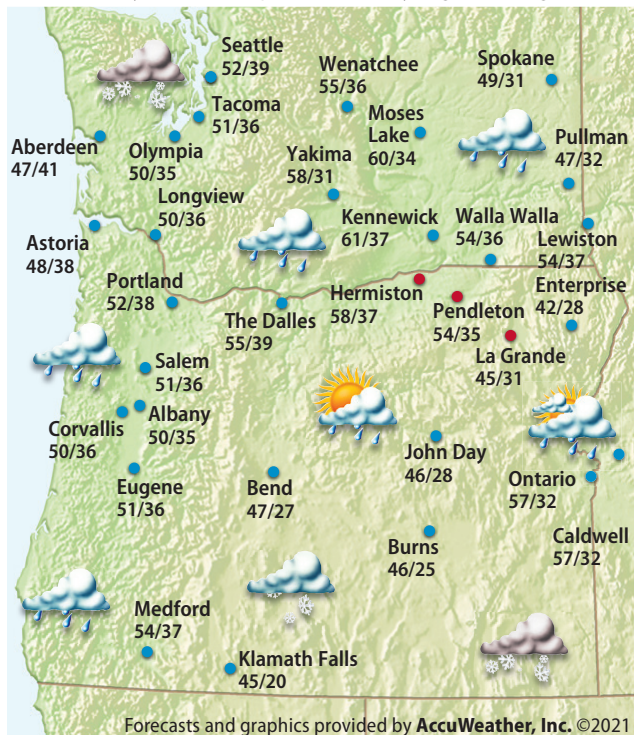
One of the conditions of the release agreement requires Deuel-Clinkenbeard to meet with a doctor and to take any medications prescribed.

Forecast for Pendleton Area



OREGON FORECAST

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



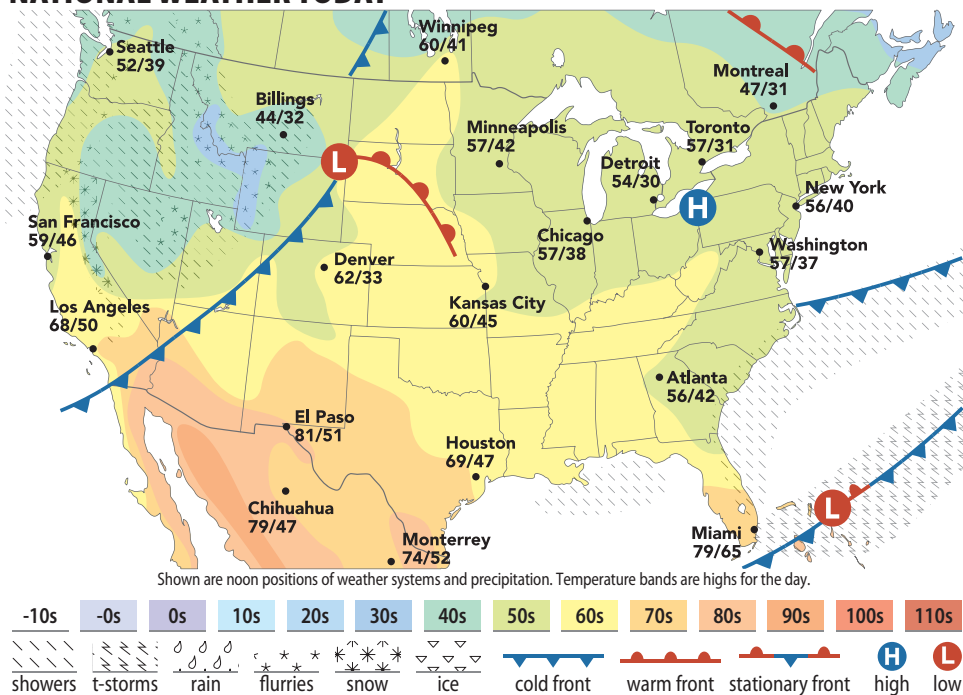
ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.		
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	57°	42°
Normals	56°	36°
Records	80° (1934)	18° (1965)
PRECIPITATION	24 hours ending 3 p.m.	
	Month to date	0.15"
	Normal month to date	0.81"
	Year to date	3.17"
	Last year to date	4.67"
	Normal year to date	3.32"
HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.		
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	61°	42°
Normals	59°	35°
Records	80° (1934)	13° (1965)
PRECIPITATION	24 hours ending 3 p.m.	
	Month to date	0.01"
	Normal month to date	0.08"
	Year to date	0.58"
	Last year to date	1.16"
	Normal year to date	2.82"
WINDS (in mph)		
	Today	Sun.
Boardman	WSW 10-20	WSW 10-20
Pendleton	WSW 12-25	WSW 10-20
SUN AND MOON		
Sunrise today	6:58 a.m.	
Sunset tonight	7:08 p.m.	
Moonrise today	10:34 a.m.	
Moonset today	1:46 a.m.	
First Full Last New		
Mar 21 Mar 28 Apr 4 Apr 11		

NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)
High 88° in Boca Raton, Fla. Low -2° in Lake George, Colo.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



Donation, prank or call for help?

Walla Walla church finds more than 1,200 pounds of candles left at door

By SHEILA HAGAR
Walla Walla Union-Bulletin

WALLA WALLA, Wash. — The Rev. David Sibley remains puzzled over a mysterious event this week, but he's not expecting any more light to be shed on the situation.

Sibley is the pastor of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Walla Walla, where, on two consecutive nights, a massive dumping of candles took place.

“On (Monday, March 15), I came to the church to find someone had dumped a large quantity of candles,” Sibley said Thursday, March 18. “We cleaned it up, and when I came back on (Tuesday, March 16), there were even more candles.”

Altogether, more than 1,200 pounds of candles went to the city of Walla Walla's Sudbury Landfill, he said.

Video camera footage shows that from about 9:30 p.m. to around 2 a.m., on both nights, a person who appears to be male and wearing a winter camouflage jacket goes to and from the

front entry of the church at Catherine and Birch streets.

Each time the person approaches St. Paul's, he or she wears a backpack and carries two or three duffel-style bags, bends over for a few minutes at the church door and exits the scene with bags that look empty.

In one video clip, two women leaving the church appear to not notice the bags being emptied just a few feet away.

The candle bearer does not appear to lag in energy during the several on-and-off trips each night.

Sibley said most of the candles left behind were pillar candles, some had Goodwill stickers, some were still in wrappers, and many had been previously burned.

In terms of wax and cost, the candle dump was “not insignificant,” he said.

Both events resulted in volunteers having to clean up the site and make a dump run.

“As I said to a friend, it was just bizarre enough to be amusing and quantitative enough to be annoying,” Sibley said.

The church did not initially alert police over what seemed



Sibley

definitely weird, but not particularly suspicious. After all, it is not completely out of the ordinary to find donated items left at any church door, he pointed out.

“It's a little annoying; we wish people would call us first,” he said. “But it's part of life.”

The two-night candle caper, however, is different. Not that the person leaving the loot necessarily has ill intentions toward St. Paul's, but a massive quantity of candles does present an opportunistic prankster plenty of fuel to start havoc, Sibley said.

“That's a lot of paraffin in a small place,” he said.

If the deed was an oddly distributed donation, no church needs that many candles, he said.

“And if it is a prank, guys please. ... All right, well played, but please, don't do that again,” Sibley said.

However, the pastor most wonders if the unusual moment comes from a mental health issue, maybe even a psychotic break.

“I'm concerned this person is suffering. It's a good reminder people are struggling. ... We want to encourage people to seek help, and encourage us to have compassion for each other,” Sibley said. “There's no shame in talking about this.”

IN BRIEF

EOU No. 3 on list of Oregon colleges COVID-19 cases

SALEM — A New York Times review of COVID-19 cases published on March 2 shows 3,189 cases of the disease linked to Oregon colleges since February 2020.

The University of Oregon had the highest reported positive test count at 1,479. Oregon State is second at 787 cases and Eastern

Oregon University was third at 111 cases.

The Times put an asterisk next to Oregon Health & Science University in Portland, which reported 335 cases early in the pandemic. The campus includes a medical center and other facilities that serve the community.

The review compiled 535,000 cases at more than 1,900 colleges and universities.

— EO Media Group

CORRECTIONS: 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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211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton 541-276-2211
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