

Family members speak out during emotion-filled sentencing

Anthony Montwheeler pleaded guilty Feb. 26 to second-degree murder, other charges

By PAT CALDWELL
Malheur Enterprise

VALE — Anthony Montwheeler sat in clean street clothes with a fresh haircut and stared straight ahead Friday, March 19, as more than a dozen people delivered statements at his sentencing at the Malheur County Courthouse.

The session was the final chapter on a four-year legal case that began in the early morning hours of a cold, overcast January day in 2017.

The former Nampa man pleaded guilty Feb. 26 to second-degree murder, first-degree manslaughter and third-degree assault.



Montwheeler

Montwheeler stabbed to death his ex-wife, Annita Harmon, killed Vale resident David Bates and injured his wife Jessica in a head-on crash as he fled police.

Under terms of the plea deal reached earlier this year, Montwheeler will serve a life sentence for killing Harmon, but will be eligible for parole in 25 years — when he is 78. But he would have to serve another 10 years of the 20-year sentence he has agreed to for Bates'



Malheur Enterprise, File

Anthony Montwheeler sits in a wheelchair in the Malheur County Courthouse in this undated file photo. Under terms of a plea deal reached earlier this year, Montwheeler will serve a life sentence for killing Annita Harmon, but will be eligible for parole in 25 years — when he is 78.

death. He would also get a three-year sentence for injuring Jessica Bates, to be served as part of the overall sentence.

While there was an undercurrent of anger from the relatives of David Bates and Harmon, a major theme from many of the speakers was one of forgiveness.

"All I can do is pray for your tormented soul," said Lucas

Faverau, Annita Harmon's son.

Stacey Harmon-Roeber, Annita Harmon's older sister, told Montwheeler "I have no words of anger toward Tony."

"God loves Tony as much as he loves me," said Harmon-Roeber.

Harmon-Roeber told the court that her kid sister was a "precocious, tow-headed, brown eyed girl that loved to tease us."

"I remember how she loved horses and animals. I remember special sister time when she was little," said Harmon-Roeber.

Harmon-Roeber said the Montwheeler's crimes terrorized her.

"I used to be fearless. Now I am a fearful red head. I have anxiety. I don't sleep at night," Harmon-Roeber said.

At one point Harmon-Roeber

began to weep.

"I wonder what her body felt when he stabbed her. I hate I wasn't there to protect her," Harmon-Roeber said through tears.

Jessica Bates also wept when she delivered her remarks.

"It is obvious you caused a huge amount of hurt and loss. It still feels surreal," said Bates.

"I want you to know that I forgive you. I really do hope this will give you pause to stop and seek God," said Bates.

Bates told the court she "never in a million years dreamed I'd be married to someone so wonderful and have five children."

"I didn't want to lose David so early," said Bates.

After the testimony from the families, Dave Goldthorpe, Malheur County district attorney, told the court "there is no punishment under the laws of the state of Oregon harsh enough for Anthony Montwheeler."

"No amount of time in prison could ever even come close to making these families whole after what he did to all of them," said Goldthorpe.

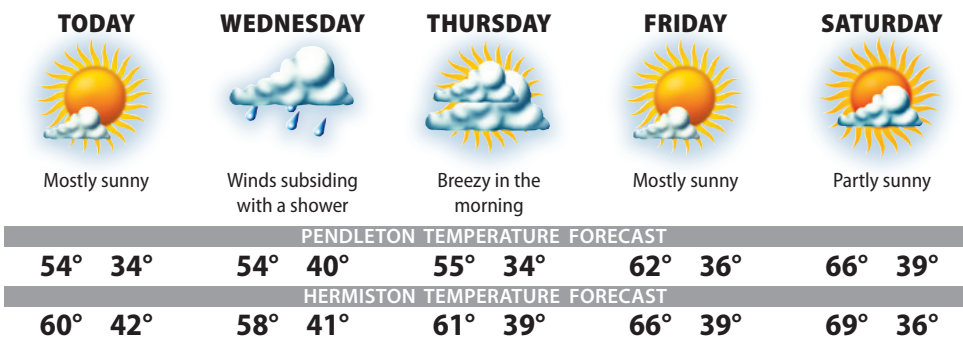
Goldthorpe called Montwheeler "evil."

"He is abusive. He is a horrible human being and his face should never be seen by any of these good people who have spoken to you today," said Goldthorpe.

Montwheeler gave a brief statement at the end of the sentencing.

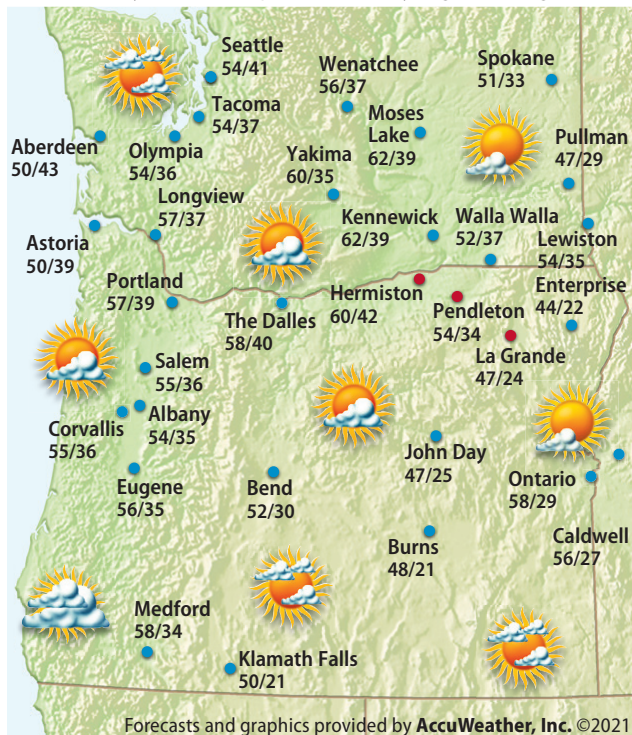
"I can't express the right words of sorrow. I have caused so much pain. To say I am sorry isn't nearly enough," said Montwheeler.

Forecast for Pendleton Area



OREGON FORECAST

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



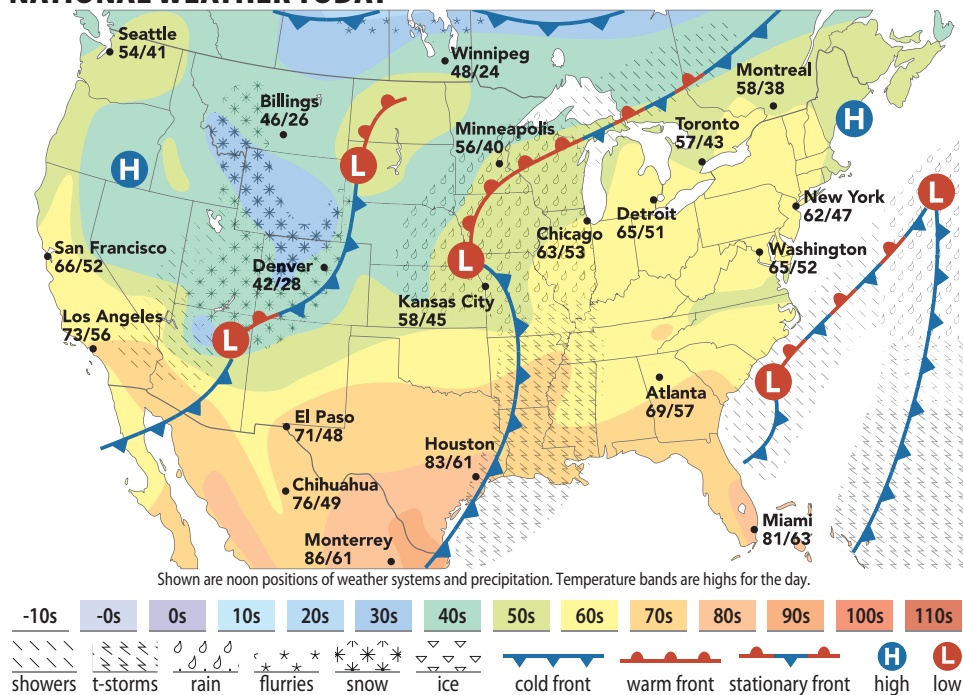
ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.		
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	54°	38°
Normals	56°	36°
Records	83° (1911)	13° (1898)
PRECIPITATION		
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.09"	
Month to date	0.24"	
Normal month to date	0.97"	
Year to date	3.26"	
Last year to date	4.67"	
Normal year to date	3.48"	
HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.		
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	60°	42°
Normals	59°	36°
Records	78° (1940)	19° (2014)
PRECIPITATION		
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.01"	
Month to date	0.09"	
Normal month to date	0.66"	
Year to date	1.17"	
Last year to date	0.48"	
Normal year to date	2.90"	
WINDS (in mph)		
Today	WSW 4-8	Wed. WSW 12-25
Pendleton	W 6-12	WSW 10-20
SUN AND MOON		
Sunrise today	6:52 a.m.	
Sunset tonight	7:12 p.m.	
Moonrise today	1:11 p.m.	
Moonset today	4:29 a.m.	
Full	Last	New
Mar 28	Apr 4	Apr 11
		Apr 19

NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)
High 92° in Zapata, Texas Low -2° in Daniel, Wyo.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



ODFW says wolves consumed newborn calf in Baker County

Not enough evidence to prove the wolves also killed the calf

By JAYSON JACOBY
Baker City Herald

BAKER CITY — Wolves from the Lookout Mountain pack in eastern Baker County consumed a recently born calf last week near Pritchard Creek, north of Durkee, but state wildlife biologists couldn't determine whether the wolves actually killed the animal.

There was no blood, hide or muscle tissue, and nothing left of the calf but the front incisors and two parts of the jawbone, which made a definite conclusion about the cause of death impossible, said Brian Ratliff, district wildlife biologist at the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's (ODFW) Baker City office.

There were tracks in the area from an adult cow and from multiple wolves, and

matted down vegetation indicating some sort of "altercation" took place, Ratliff said.

The incident is listed as a possible/unknown wolf depredation.

The Lookout Mountain pack consists of a male and female adult wolf, and two pups that were born in the spring of 2020, Ratliff said.

Both the adults have tracking collars.

On Tuesday, March 16, ODFW received a signal from the GPS collar fitted to the female adult wolf, which has black fur, showing the animal was in the Pritchard Creek area, Ratliff said.

ODFW notified a rancher who has cattle in the area.

The rancher found the remains of the calf on the evening of Wednesday, March 17, Ratliff said.

According to an ODFW report, the rancher reported that his cattle were "stirred up" on the morning of March 16, and that he saw a black, radio-collared wolf carrying

a leg bone on the evening of March 17.

The site where the teeth and bones were found is north of Interstate 84 in the Durkee Valley area, on public land adjacent to a large private pasture. Ratliff said cattle are scattered on both private and public land in the area, which is about 20 miles east of Baker City.

Ratliff said on Friday, March 19 that based on signals from the collars, the adult female wolf was in the area where the teeth and bones were found at 10 p.m. on March 16 and at 6 a.m. on March 17. Signals later in the week showed that the wolves have remained in the general area, he said.

Ratliff said ranchers who have cattle in the area are aware of the wolves' presence, and Ratliff said he has suggested they take precautions such as ensuring the cattle are in groups, which can help protect them from wolves and other predators.

IN BRIEF

Five wolves found dead in Northeast Oregon

SALEM — Five wolves were found dead in Northeast Oregon in February, according to law authorities.

On Feb. 9, a collar on a wolf indicated a mortality signal in the Mount Harris area in Union County, Oregon State Police Capt. Timothy R. Fox said in an email on Friday, March 19, when asked about it by The Associated Press.

Arriving officers found a total of five wolves dead, Fox said. The cause of death is unknown, he said. All five carcasses were taken to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife forensic lab to determine the cause of death,

the email said.

The incident is under investigation, according to Oregon Fish and Wildlife spokeswoman Michelle Dennehy.

"This is very unsettling news for a species that is only just beginning to recover in Oregon," Kathleen Gobush, Northwest program director at Defenders of Wildlife said in a news release. "Predators, particularly wolves, are often the target of ruthless persecution, and the killing of one wolf, not to mention five, appears to follow a growing pattern of grave concern. Defenders of Wildlife will continue to work to make Oregon safe for people and wolves."

No further information was released.
—EO Media Group

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