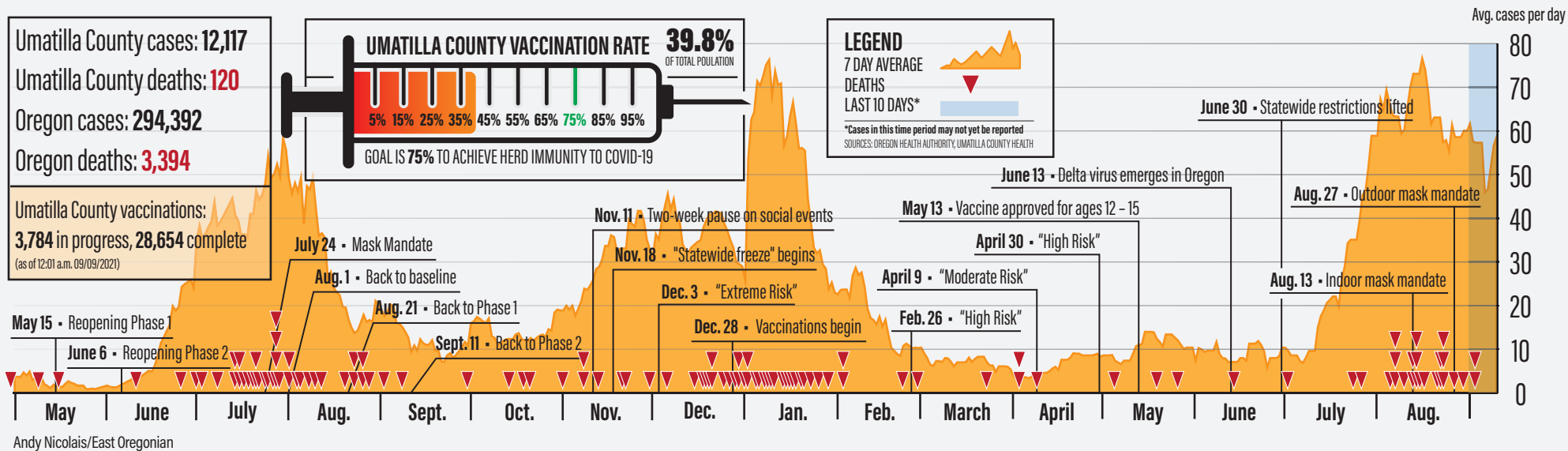


UMATILLA COUNTY COVID-19 TREND - AS OF SEPT. 9



Local police help nab leaders of outlaw motorcycle gang

One works as prison guard at Washington State Penitentiary, Walla Walla

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

WALLA WALLA — Local police detectives on Thursday, Sept. 9, helped the Gang Intelligence Team of the Walla Walla County Sheriff's Office arrest leaders of an outlaw motorcycle gang.

The sheriff's office in a press release reported police captured Dustin Wendelin, a corrections officer with the Washington Department of Corrections, and Charles Montgomery of Milton-Freewater.

Both hold leadership positions in a local chapter of the Pagan's Motorcycle Club, the sheriff's office reported. Wendelin is in the Walla Walla County Jail, Walla Walla, and Montgomery is in the Umatilla County Jail, Pendleton.

The Walla Walla County Sheriff's Office reported it has been collaborating with Spalding County Sheriff's Office, in Griffin, Georgia, for several months, along with federal law enforcement partners. Intelligence generated from traffic stops in Walla Walla County led to a joint investigation into two local members of the Pagan's MC, the sheriff's office reported.

The Pagan's is a "1%er" or "One Percenter" club — the 1% of motorcycle clubs that operate outside the bounds of the law. The gang frequently participates in violent crime, trafficking and racketeering, according to the sheriff's office, and Pagan's members nationwide in the past have allegedly participated in bombings, shootings, felonious assaults and homicides.

The Walla Walla County Sheriff's Office worked with the Georgia Bureau of Investigation and the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, the Drug Enforcement Agency and the FBI, as well as several law enforcement agencies in Washington state.

Detectives with the Umatilla

Tribal Police Department, Morrow County Sheriff's Office and with the police departments of Pendleton, Hermiston, Milton-Freewater and Boardman also participated in the apprehensions. Those local agencies are members of the Blue Mountain Enforcement Narcotics Team, the local illegal drug task force.

The Pendleton Police Department oversees BENT. Pendleton Police Chief Charles Byram said the arrests of the two Pagan's was not an official BENT project, and detective Rick Jackson, the lead on BENT, and detective Howard Bowen, who is not on BENT, both assisted.

Wendelin's apprehension came at approximately 6 a.m. at the Wash-

ington State Penitentiary in Walla Walla. The Walla Walla Union-Bulletin reported public records show Wendelin lives in Milton-Freewater.

About three hours later, police arrested Montgomery at his residence in Milton-Freewater.

The sheriff's office reported both men are indicted in Georgia with charges of aggravated assault, aggravated battery and three counts each of violation of the street gang terrorism and prevention act.

The sheriff's office also reported Wendelin and Montgomery's extradition to Georgia is the first step in a joint investigation into the West Coast Pagan's MC, and the local investigation continues with additional charges pending.

Window painting returns for the return of Round-Up

The passion for painting continues

By NICK ROSENBERGER
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — It all began with a former Navy man who worked at the Pendleton Post Office. As new 1950s cars rumbled past the town's brick buildings, Tom Simonton began painting the signs for the grocery store next door to his work in his free time.

Simonton, known locally as "Big Tom," eventually moved from signs to painting shop windows and, when Round-Up rolled around, someone asked him to start painting rodeo cartoons on their storefronts.

"And that's how it all started," said Rick Simonton, Tom's son.

Big Tom spent his days cartooning, drawing and painting everywhere he went. He would draw on the back of napkins for waiters, he would visit hospitals to whip up cartoons for doctors and babies, he would paint animals on the bellies of kids and windows for Round-Up.

"Every place he went he would draw something for anybody and everybody," Simonton said.

A completely self-taught cartoonist and painter, he would continue his creative hobby for the rest of his life until he died in 1993.

"I think he just liked it," he said, "he liked to make people happy."

Big Tom's paintings and cartoons were so popular and so in-demand that nearly



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian
One of Laurie Doherty's Round-Up cartoons adorns the front window of the Rainbow Cafe Friday, Sept. 10, 2021, in downtown Pendleton.

every shop-owner in Pendleton seemed to want him to come by. Overwhelmed by the number of requests during Round-Up in the 1970s, Laurie Doherty joined in the efforts to cover Pendleton's windows in paint.

"It fell into my lap because Tom was overloaded," Doherty said.

Doherty and Tom Simonton had two things in common: a voracious appetite for creativity and a passion for painting. The two were constantly creating, never quite turning off the switch on their imaginations. And, over decades, the paintings have become a part of the Pendleton community — a legacy that can be found in nooks and crannies around town during Round-Up week. A permanent mural of Big Tom's remains at Crabby's Underground Saloon.

When Doherty published a book titled "Be Happy, Be Healthy and Learn to

Cartoon," she visited schools around the region to talk with and teach children about painting cartoons. She said she loved to see the bright light go off in their eyes after realizing that they'd painted something.

"It made my heart sing," she said.

And that was an element she said kept her going.

"Knowing that it was making a difference," she said, "a positive difference — in people's lives, giving them hope."

After 51 years, Doherty still is looking for ways to express herself and has continued to paint windows, completing four this year even with a broken bone in her foot.

Doherty, who is planning on retiring soon, runs a nonprofit art studio called Laurie's Cartoons and is offering to teach those with creative souls how to paint and cartoon to keep the tradition alive.

LOCAL BRIEFING

Governor will sit out '21 Round-Up

SALEM — Gov. Kate Brown will skip the 2021 Pendleton Round-Up.

At a Tuesday, Sept. 7, press conference to discuss the state of the COVID-19 pandemic and the start of school, KGW reporter Pat Dooris asked Brown if she would attend this year's rodeo and what she would say to attendees.

"Unfortunately I will not be going this year," she said. "For those who are attending, I encourage them to get vaccinated ahead of time and to wear their masks. I know that sometimes it can be quite warm in the Pendleton region but we know that, combined with vaccines, masks are a very simple and effective tool to reduce transmission of the delta variant."

After she encouraged rodeo-goers to "Let'er Buck," Dooris asked why she was declining to attend.

"I'm certainly concerned about community spread," she said.

Umatilla County OKs site to take on homelessness

HERMISTON — The Umatilla County Board of Commissioners on Wednesday, Sept. 8, agreed to allow a warming station and tempo-

rory living huts to go on 10 acres the county owns.

The site is at the intersection of Lind and Bensch roads, Hermiston, and the county Public Works Department has used the site to store aggregate storage, and Granite Construction leases part of the site for equipment, rock and gravel storage.

Commissioner George Murdock said the county has been working with Umatilla, Hermiston, Echo and Stanfield on a site for temporary shelters to help take on homelessness. Commissioner Dan Dorran at the meeting said the land is flat and usable and near Highway 395, which makes it good for transportation to towns as far away as Milton-Freewater.

Umatilla County would own the shelter and continue to own the land.

Hermiston City Manager Byron Smith said the project is largely a response to a new law the Oregon Legislature passed in June that mandates cities codify ordinances that would protect people from fines and fees for sleeping on public lands if a local government fails to provide other viable alternatives. Cities have two years to comply with the law.

The local plan at this stage calls for a modular building to act as a warming station that also would provide showers, restrooms and meeting

areas. The site would need to connect to infrastructure for water and power, and and pumping truck would provide sewage services.

Funding for the project could come from grants but also local cities.

Rather than each of the four cities creating its own solution for the new mandates, Smith said the shelter is an effort by the cities to find a comprehensive solution to assist those experiencing homelessness.

— EO Media Group

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PAW Patrol: The Movie (G)
 1:30p 3:50p

Free Guy (PG13)
 1:50p 4:50p 8:10p

Jungle Cruise (PG13)
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Many of you have served with Bob and his family during his 85 years of volunteer service to the Round-up! We'd love to have you stop by and share your memories that have made the Pendleton Round-up such a special event for the Stangier family and the great town of Pendleton!

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