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## Remembering Dora

### Grandsons honor grandmother they never met

By KATHY ANEY  
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Dora Rhodes' new tombstone gleamed in the mid-afternoon sun.

A knot of mourners gathered in a semicircle around the grave. They prayed and laughed and shed a tear or two. They sang "Amazing Grace" and other old hymns.

By all appearances, the gathering on Saturday, Oct. 9, at Pendleton's Olney Cemetery seemed a typical farewell for a beloved family member.

Except for one curious fact: None of the 10 people assembled had ever met Dora.

She had died at age 33 almost 100 years earlier on Jan. 6, 1922. The oldest person in attendance was Dora's 90-year-old granddaughter, Marilyn Williams.

The idea to honor Dora evolved after her two grandsons stopped by Olney Cemetery to find their grandmother's final resting place. They located the grave but the headstone had vanished.

Jack Rhodes, a retired newspaper editor from California, and Don Rhodes, a retired banker from Washington, decided to have a new grave marker made. Then they made plans for a small ceremony to honor the grandmother they'd never met. Eight other family members joined them around the grave on that sunny, breezy Oct. 9. Officiating was Pastor

Patty Nance, of the Hermiston First United Methodist Church.

Jack Rhodes, the unofficial family historian, shared what he had uncovered about Dora's short life as the mourners stood near Dora's new gravestone.

The upshot, Jack said, is that it was miraculous that Dora was ever born. When her father, John Jacob Davis, was a baby, his parents, David L. and Eliza Davis, took him on a perilous journey from Iowa to California where they planned to search for gold. The family traveled by boat and mule to Old Panama City where they aimed to board an ocean liner called Golden Gate bound for San Francisco. When they couldn't procure tickets, they instead boarded the Victorine. The ship, Jack explained, was skippered by "the quintessential evil ship captain."

According to writing by Dora's uncle William Murray, the dishonest captain sold a good deal of the provisions. After 25 days, the rations were nearly gone. Each day, adults each received a small biscuit and half a pint of coffee for breakfast and half a cup of tea for supper. Babies got nothing. John Jacob's parents and uncle gave him pinches of their biscuits and a mouthful of coffee every day. According to his uncle, the infant "spent his awake time crying for something to eat or drink."

The passengers spent time unsuccessfully trying to trap rats on the ship or fished for



Jack Rhodes/Contributed Photo  
Dora Davis Rhodes poses with her second husband, Arthur Rhodes, sometime before her death at age 33 in 1922.

boobies. When they hooked one, they ate meat, blood, entrails and almost every other part. They buried at sea the 10 passengers who starved on the journey. After more than 78 days at sea, they made it to San Diego and a couple of months later to San Francisco. John Jacob, Dora's future father, had

survived. Dora's birth hung by nothing more than a slender thread during that desperate journey.

"If things had turned out differently, Dora would never have been born," Jack said, "and neither would any of us."

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## Senate hearing on Sams to head National Parks set for Oct. 19

By GARY A. WARNER  
Oregon Capital Bureau

WASHINGTON — A politically polarized Senate has set Oct. 19 for a hearing on the nomination of former Oregon tribal leader Chuck Sams as the next director of the National Parks Service.

Sams, the longtime administrator of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation in Oregon, will appear before the Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee.

Sams is the latest in a series of nominations by President Joe Biden that is part of an effort to restore environmental policies rolled back under President Donald Trump.

If confirmed, Sams would be the first American Indian to serve as National Parks Service director. He is Cayuse, Walla Walla, Cocopah and Yankton Sioux.

He also would be a rare outsider to head the service founded in 1916. The director manages the 63 national parks such as Yellowstone, Yosemite, Grand Canyon and Crater Lake.

The agency's 21,000 employees manage 423 sites making up 85 million acres in all 50 states, Washington, D.C., and U.S. territories.

The hearing likely will include questions about Biden's order announced Friday, Oct. 8, to reverse Trump's decision to reduce the size of protected areas of national monuments in Utah and New England.

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Sams

## Report shows some students falling off-track

### Pandemic skews some data; distance learning cements inequities in public schools

By ANTONIO SIERRA  
East Oregonian

UMATILLA COUNTY — For the second straight year, local districts are working with incomplete report cards.

On Thursday, Oct. 7, the Oregon Department of Education released its report cards for every district in the state, but the COVID-19 pandemic influenced the 2020-21 school year enough that much of the data came with caveats. For instance, participation in state testing dropped across the state in light of the pandemic. If participation fell below a certain threshold in certain districts or among certain groups of students, the state either suppressed the data outright or advised people against comparing the data.

Matt Yoshioka, the curriculum instruction and assessment director for the Pendleton School District, said much of the data from the report card is unusable. He pointed to McKay Creek Elementary School, which reported more than 95% of its students qualified for free or reduced lunch after documenting a 41% pre-pandemic.

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Family members and Pastor Patty Nance gather on Saturday, Oct. 9, 2021, at Olney Cemetery, Pendleton, to remember Dora Rhodes who died almost 100 years ago. Her grandsons replaced her graver marker after finding the original was gone.

## Community rallies behind hopeful parents

### Sarah and Zach Gaulke are trying to adopt

By ERICK PETERSON  
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — When one Pendleton couple could not have a child on their own, several people and a few organizations throughout Umatilla County began helping.

Sarah and Zach Gaulke, who are both 33 and teachers, want to adopt a child. They have been married 11 years, and have tried to have a child for the past five years.

#### Sarah dreams of motherhood

Sarah, a Pendleton High School special education teacher, remembered when she was a small girl, playing with dolls and someday becoming



Mary Adams/Contributed Photo

Zach and Sarah Gaulke of Pendleton pose for a recent photo to express their intent to adopt a child. The couple is raising money to make their desire a reality.

a mother. Born in California, her family moved to Indiana briefly and then to Hermiston, where she spent a childhood thinking of her future. She

would become a mom, and maybe a stay-at-home mom, if that were possible.

"It's who I am," she said of her

desire to be a mom. And while her career thoughts changed — when she went to college, she began wanting to be a teacher — her feelings about motherhood have not.

She does not care about whether the child is a boy or girl. Neither does she care if the child has a disability. In fact, the agency with which she and Zach are dealing, told her she and Zach are extremely accommodating. They have approved an unusually long list of disabilities they would accept.

Sarah reasons, if they were to birth a child, there would be a chance for the child to have any number of conditions. It would be up to God, she said. So, they will leave it up to God in the adoption. She said, they will love the child, regardless.

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