

# 'I'm never free of it'

Baker City woman recounts living with polio

By LISA BRITTON  
Baker City Herald

BAKER CITY — A virus changed Gloria Schott's life.

Not the virus that has so dramatically affected society today, but one of many years ago — a virus that mostly affected children and now is nearly eradicated from the world.

Schott, of Baker City, was diagnosed with polio when she was 3 1/2 years old.

"On Oct. 9, it'll be 75 years. I lived instead of died," she said.

Schott was living with her family in Weiser, Idaho. She's heard stories of how her illness began.

"I've been told it was my uncle's birthday and I wouldn't eat ice cream. Shortly thereafter I started to fall," she said.

Her parents took her to the local doctor.

"He immediately diagnosed me," she said.

And immediately isolated her.

Schott was admitted to St. Luke's Hospital in Boise on Oct. 9, 1946.

Her parents were not allowed to see her. She said her mom got a job at the Table Rock Cafe in Boise, and would come to the hospital after work to peer at her daughter through a crack in the door.

Schott remembers wanting her mother. She would call out: "Mother, mama, where are you? I need you!"

"And she was standing right there," she said.

Schott had contracted the type of polio that caused paralysis. When she regained some movement, the hospital staff would put her on the floor and let her explore.

"I did the army crawl," she said.

She distinctly remembered crawling down the hall and into a room filled with patients in iron lungs — a tube-like machine that provided breathing support for polio patients suffering paralysis of the diaphragm. "The whole floor was polio," she said.

Schott had heard the voice of a patient through her wall — the voice was deep and raspy, and she referred to it as "my boyfriend."

But when she crawled in there, and lay beneath the iron lung to see the patient's face, she discovered that her "boyfriend" was in fact a teenage girl.

"The last time I saw her, she walked into a clinic with crutches and braces up to her hips," Schott said.

She left the hospital on her fourth birthday — Feb. 28, 1947.

"They saved my life," she said. "I wasn't supposed to live. They told my parents I would die."

But though polio spared Schott's life, the virus never truly left her.

She used crutches until she was 13, and wore a brace on her right leg for many years.

"They were terrible. Solid metal," she said.

The hospital stay was followed by physical therapy and hydrotherapy during the week, as well as four



Lisa Britton/Baker City Herald

**Gloria Schott, who was diagnosed with polio 75 years ago, at age 3, later was a poster child for the March of Dimes, a nationwide effort to eradicate polio. The Baker City resident still has the blue dress she wore for promotional photographs.**

surgeries — three on her right leg, one on her left.

Schott became an ambassador for the hospital, and participated in fashion shows to help raise money for a new building.

She also became a poster child for the March of Dimes.

Schott still has the posters and flyers, as well as the blue dress she wore.

The March of Dimes was founded by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1938 as a nationwide effort to eradicate polio. Much of the money raised helped fund research to develop a vaccine.

Some of that funding went to Dr. Jonas Salk, who developed a vaccine made from dead polio cells.

Schott received that vaccine. Although she'd already contracted



Lisa Britton/Baker City Herald

**Gloria Schott smiles for a photo Tuesday, Oct. 5, 2021, on her front porch in Baker City. Schott was diagnosed with polio 75 years ago, on Oct. 9, 1946.**

polio, doctors told her parents that she still could catch the other strains. The vaccine would protect against all three.

Growing up, the crutches and braces limited her physical activity, so jacks and marbles helped pass the time.

And reading — a love that she credited to her second grade teacher, Ms. Holmes.

During that year, every day Schott could choose a friend to eat lunch with in the classroom. As they ate, Ms. Holmes read "The Little House on the Prairie" series of books.

"She instilled a love of reading," Schott said.

There were some times when her

special abilities were sought for a playground game.

"They'd get me sometimes for kickball. If I had a cast, it was solid," she said, chuckling at the memory. "I could kick it out of the field, and someone would run for me."

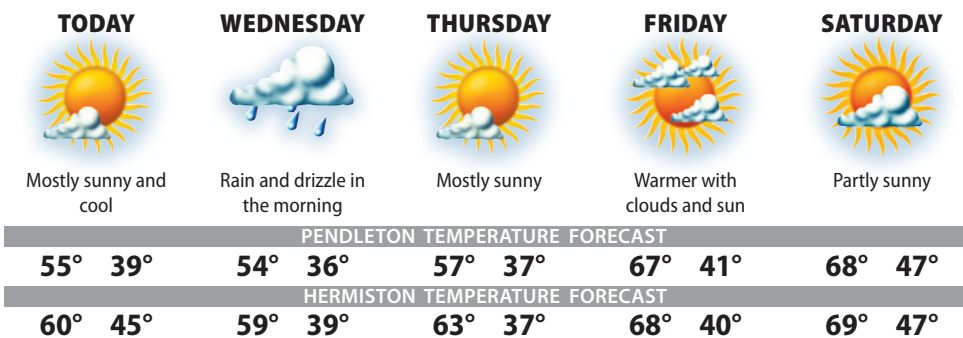
An invisible virus changed her life three quarters of a century ago, but Schott said it also created the person she is today.

"I think who I am, my passions, and my concerns for those who are hurting, stem from this," she said.

But she'll never forget that virus. "I'm never free of it," she said.

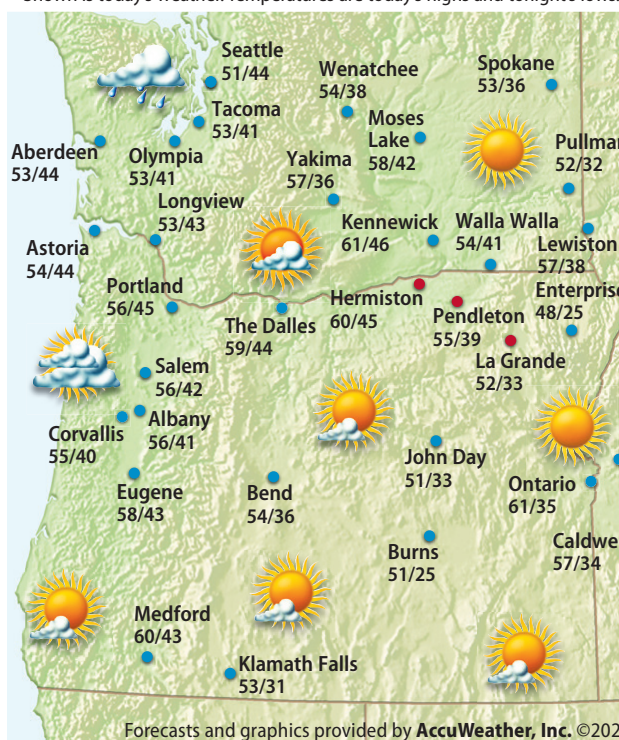
"I thought with time I would be, but polio still has a hold of me. I have no memory of not having polio."

## Forecast for Pendleton Area



## OREGON FORECAST

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



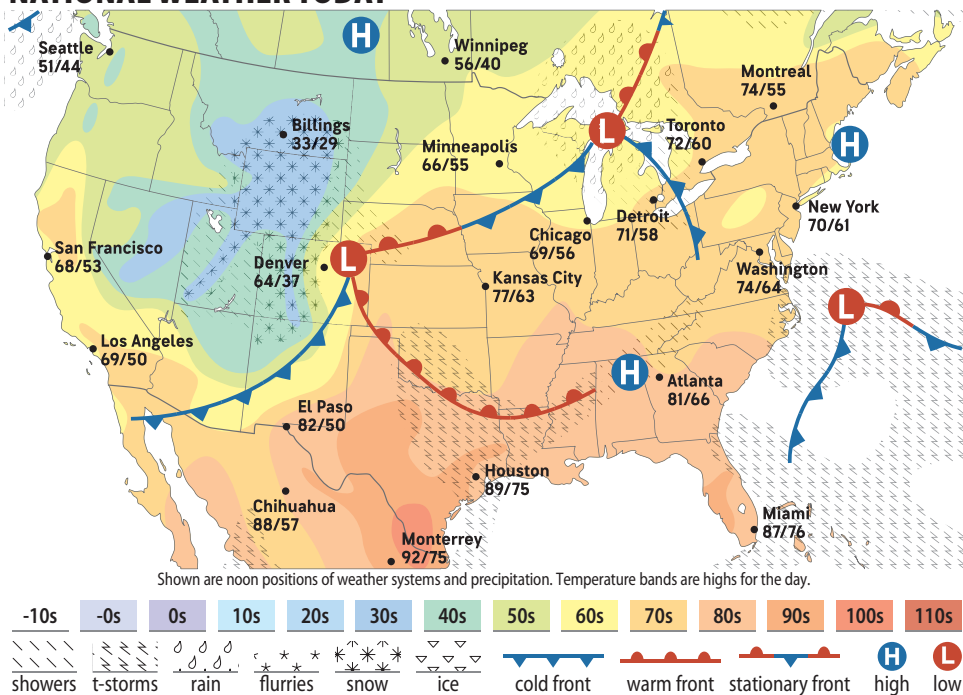
## ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.		
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	54°	35°
Normals	67°	43°
Records	84° (1934)	19° (2009)
PRECIPITATION		
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	Trace	
Month to date	0.02"	
Normal month to date	0.34"	
Year to date	5.02"	
Last year to date	9.21"	
Normal year to date	9.55"	
HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.		
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	61°	40°
Normals	69°	40°
Records	86° (1934)	19° (2009)
PRECIPITATION		
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	Trace	
Month to date	Trace	
Normal month to date	0.24"	
Year to date	2.67"	
Last year to date	2.00"	
Normal year to date	5.91"	
WINDS (in mph)		
	Today	Wed.
<b>Boardman</b>	WSW 3-6	WSW 7-14
<b>Pendleton</b>	WNW 6-12	WSW 8-16
SUN AND MOON		
Sunrise today	7:08 a.m.	
Sunset tonight	6:15 p.m.	
Moonrise today	2:43 p.m.	
Moonset today	11:04 p.m.	

## NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)  
High 95° in McAllen, Texas Low 12° in Bodie State Park, Calif.

## NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



## Filmmaker embraces chance to visit La Grande

Justin Zimmerman set to tell the story of flash animation

By DAVIS CARBAUGH  
The Observer



Justin Zimmerman/Contributed Photo

**Jim Choma, left, serves as the focal point in Justin Zimmerman's "Gone in a Flash," which will be presented at the 2021 Eastern Oregon Film Festival. Zimmerman, right, filmed the movie over three major shoots in Florida.**

LA GRANDE — La Grande is just weeks away from hosting its annual congregation of visiting filmmakers at the 2021 Eastern Oregon Film Festival.

In the festival's return to a modified in-person experience, the event's organizers are excited to be showing a record-high 53 films this year. Of the 17 filmmakers coming to show their films in person, Portland-based Justin Zimmerman is embracing the chance to come to La Grande after missing out last year due to the pandemic.

"It's an incredible film festival with an incredible pedigree," Zimmerman said. "You know you're in the hands of people who really love films and support filmmakers. Those are the places that you want to be with your work."

While this year's festi-

val will mark the first time Zimmerman has stepped foot in La Grande, he is no longer a stranger to the Eastern Oregon Film Festival. Zimmerman presented his short film "The Other Border" at last year's virtual festival and enjoyed the camaraderie among filmmakers, albeit virtual, that the event presented.

"I participated in the Q&A last year and I thought it was a remarkable film festival," he said. "I was delighted that another documentary was invited this year, so that I could come in person and experience the town and the festival."

Zimmerman is showing

his film "Gone in a Flash," a documentary short about the minds behind flash animation during the early days of the internet. The four-minute film dives into the artists behind the early flash animation and its effect on a generation who was new to the internet at the time. The film centers around Jim Choma, one of the original artists to use flash animation who ultimately became somewhat of a cult-favorite across Canada.

"I love this film," Zimmerman said. "It's extraordinary the cross-cultural impact this guy had, but nobody knows about him. So much of that flash work has just disappeared."

## IN BRIEF

### Man with terminal cancer sentenced for child sex abuse

BEND — A Bend man with terminal cancer was sentenced Friday, Oct. 8, to 12 years in prison for sexually abusing a young relative more than a decade ago.

Terry Scott Haines, 48, last came to court with the aid of a wheelchair in January 2020 seeking a release from jail due to brain cancer that had spread to other organs and a prognosis of less than two years to live. He has been on house arrest ever since.

He was sentenced in Deschutes County Circuit Court having reached a plea deal, more than two years after his arrest.

Haines' attorney, Jonathan Char, told the court his client is suffering from terminal cancer.

During the sentencing, Haines asked the court: "Am I going to a medical facility because I'm not curable?" Judge Bethany Flint told Haines she could not comment on that.

Char said he believed Haines expected imprisonment at a medical facility given his condition, but would not elaborate on his client's state. In 2020, Haines suffered from seizures and headaches.

"I can only say, he's not getting better," Char said. "I do think it's a waste of resources to put him in prison."

Deschutes County District Attorney John Hummel said the crime justifies the sentence.

"I do not celebrate long prison sentences," Hummel said. "When my office seeks one, it's because we've determined it's necessary for community safety. This is one of those times."

Flint gave Haines until noon Friday to turn himself in at the Deschutes County jail, where he'll begin the process of transferring into the state prison system.

First-degree sex abuse is a Measure 11 crime in Oregon, punishable by mandatory minimum sentencing.

—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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