

Pendleton loses ‘pillar of the community’

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — One of Pendleton’s longest tenured residents, Elnor Alkio, died Dec. 12. She was 105.

Don Potter, her friend and caretaker, said she had suffered a stroke in July that left her prone to seizures, one of which led her to fall and hit her head. When doctors told her she would never fully regain her health, Potter admitted her to a hospice. She died early Dec. 13, he said.

Potter said he’s been friends with Alkio for 26 years and her caretaker for 16.

“She was a great person,” he said. “She was a pillar of this community.”

Living to 105 years old and having spent most of it

Pendleton meant Alkio was a major historical resource for residents and visitors alike. According to an East Oregonian story published near her 100th birthday, her grandparents arrived in the Northwest on the Oregon Trail, and after settling in Pendleton, her grandfather sold buggies and wagons prior to the automobile era. Her father ran a laundry service before switching to farming after World War I, growing wheat and canola in the area where Wildhorse Resort & Casino is now.

Alkio followed in her mother’s footsteps by attending Oregon State University — which was Oregon State College in Alkio’s time and Oregon Agricultural College in her mother’s.

Alkio spent 30 years teaching home economics

to Pendleton’s middle and high schoolers and eventually started a business of her own with a friend, an art gallery named the Collector’s Gallery, 223 S.E. Court Ave. She eventually took over the business herself and turned it into an antique store. In 1991, Alkio bought the building housing the Collector’s Gallery, a structure historically known as the LaDow block.

Completed in 1884, the building was one of the town’s main commercial hubs. When Alkio took over the deed, she became only the third owner in the building’s history.

Potter said Alkio loved talking about Pendleton history with customers and visitors, sometimes spending hours going over the life and



E.J. Harris/East Oregonian, File

Pendleton resident Elnor Alkio on Nov. 21, 2016, sits in her antique shop, the Collector’s Gallery, in Pendleton. Alkio turned 100 that day. She died Dec. 12, 2021, at the age of 105.

times of the town. “She was a wealth of knowledge,” he said. “She knew everything about every building in this town, the

older ones. Everything about all the old families.”

The LaDow block started to show its age in recent years, its windows boarded

up on its second floor. Alkio long desired to restore the building’s facade and second story, and even obtained a grant from the city’s urban renewal district, but city officials said she never had the financial situation to utilize it.

Potter said he didn’t know what would happen to the property because it still needed to go through the probate process.

Alkio was preceded in death by her husband, George Alkio, who died at 52. She is survived by two daughters and several grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Potter said he is in the process of organizing a remembrance service for Alkio at the First Presbyterian Church of Pendleton.

Bank robbery suspect out of prison on compassionate release

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — The man Hermiston police arrested Friday, Dec. 17, following a bank robbery was out of federal prison on compassionate release.

Clifford Uptegrove, 58, of Yakima, remains in the Umatilla County Jail, Pendleton, on charges of first-degree robbery, first-degree theft and felony fleeing and unlawful use of a weapon. State court records show Circuit Judge Christopher Brauer on Dec. 20 set Uptegrove’s bail at \$1 million.

The robbery occurred Dec. 17 just before 3 p.m. at Umpqua Bank, 450 N. First St., Hermiston, according to Hermiston police Chief Jason Edmiston.

He said preliminary information showed that moments after the robbery, a Umatilla County sheriff’s deputy spotted the suspect in a vehicle in the area of Northwest Geer Road west of Home Depot. That led to a vehicle chase on Theater Lane and eventually to Northeast Harley Lane. The deputy tried to stop the suspect, but he took off driving again.

Hermiston police took the lead in the chase, Edmiston said, and police video shows the suspect pulled over, and to prevent him from fleeing again, a Hermiston officer in a pickup parked against the driver’s door and pinned him in.

“They they took him out at gunpoint,” Edmiston said.

While no one was injured in the robbery, according to Edmiston, it was an “incredibly traumatic situation for the employees at the bank.”

Records show Uptegrove has a history of robbing banks.

The United States Attorney’s Office for the Western District of Washington in 2005 issued a press release about Uptegrove, then 41, going to federal prison for more than 20 years plus five years probation after he pleaded guilty to armed bank robbery and using a firearm during a crime of violence.

According to the press release, police caught Uptegrove in March 2004 after a robbery at the Riverview Community Bank in Hazel Dell, Washington, and during questioning he admitted to nine robberies of credit unions from 2001-04, including twice hitting the Kennewick Community Federal Credit Union, Kennewick, and robbing the Oregon Central Credit Union in Portland three times.

Federal court records show Uptegrove was serving time at the Federal Correctional Institution, Otisville, New York, and had a release date of

March 17, 2022. But Uptegrove in 2020 sought compassionate release.

Uptegrove suffered from asthma, according to court documents, and was at an increased risk of developing COVID-19.

According to the order for his release, the court found Uptegrove took “commendable strides to grow and change while in prison, completing a number of self-help and educational programs in anticipation of his eventual release and maintaining a clean disciplinary record for the last nine-plus years.”

The court also ordered him to live with his sister in Yakima, where he could “rehabilitate in a smaller community with family nearby, while offering his sister, who is struggling with lymphoma, the help she needs.”

U.S. Senior District Judge Marsha J. Pechman signed the release order Nov. 17, 2020, freeing Uptegrove from prison 14 days after and immediately placing him under supervised release.

Edmiston said as far as the Hermiston robbery goes, police were planning on obtaining a search warrant for the vehicle Uptegrove drove to look for money from the bank and the gun he may have used.

Uptegrove next court hearing is Dec. 28 at 8:15 a.m.

Hermiston police arrest man after deadly shooting

East Oregonian

HERMISTON — A Hermiston man is in jail after a shooting early Sunday, Dec. 19, left another man dead.

Hermiston police at about 1:24 a.m. responded to a report of a man who may have been shot in the parking lot of Metro Mart, 1120 W. Highland Ave., according to information Hermiston police Capt. Travis Eynon posted on the department’s Facebook page. Officers arrived and found Kevin James Hines, 27, of Hermiston, unresponsive and not breathing.

Umatilla County Fire District No. 1 medics arrived shortly after and “worked valiantly” on Hines, according to the post, but he died at the scene.

The local major crimes team responded with detectives from Boardman Police Department, Morrow County Sheriff’s Office, Umatilla Police Department, Umatilla County Sheriff’s Office, Pendleton Police Department and Umatilla Tribal Police Department. Those detectives and Hermiston police detectives and officers worked through the night investigating the crime.

Police at about 8:05 a.m. arrested Ethan Matthew Bowe, 23, at his Hermiston residence and booked him into the Umatilla County Jail, Pendleton, for first-degree murder, unlawful use of a weapon and tampering with evidence.

“This was not random,” according to Eynon’s post, “and there is no reason to believe anyone else is in danger.”

Eynon also stated the Umatilla County District Attorney’s Office will be the point of contact for any further press releases.

SANTA AND HIS SLEIGH
are waiting outside Loftus Jewelers
for you to pick out the perfect gift.

.....

DIAMONDS • GEMSTONES
14K GOLD • STERLING SILVER
JEWELRY REPAIRS

Loftus Jewelers

Open Monday through Friday at 10am
INCLUDING CHRISTMAS EVE
541-276-3715 • 257 S Main Street

33rd ANNUAL
LIGHT UP A LIFE
FUNDRAISER

Vange John Memorial Hospice

Invites the community to support your local hospice through this fundraiser which takes place during the month of December.

Your contribution to Vange John Memorial Hospice will illuminate a symbolic light in a window display area provided by Victory Baptist Church on Main Street. You may dedicate your light in honor of someone you admire or in memory of someone you miss.

All memorials and honoree names received during the campaign will be read January 9, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. on our local radio station, KOHU 1360 AM and will be shared on Good Shepherd Health Care System’s Facebook page. An MP3 recording is available upon request.

A meaningful gift, your contribution will help you celebrate the life of loved ones during the holiday season and help us meet the needs of our hospice patients and their families all year long.

Join us for the Light Up A Life Memorial/Honoree Reading of the Names

Broadcast on KOHU 1360 AM or [f @gshcsnews](#)

January 9, 2022 | 6:00 p.m.

*Also, join us this spring for a Community Memorial Service in the park!

GOOD SHEPHERD HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

Enclosed is my tax-deductible contribution of \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____ Phone _____

* Suggested donation for each memorial/honoree: \$15

Please mail check payable to: Vange John Memorial Hospice
645 W. Orchard Ave., Suite 500 | Hermiston, OR 97838 (541-667-3543)
Your canceled check will be your receipt. (A Division of Good Shepherd Health Care System)

Please place a light & ornament in the window display to celebrate the life of:

1. _____

Send acknowledgement of this gift to: Name _____
Address _____ City/State/Zip _____

2. _____

Send acknowledgement of this gift to: Name _____
Address _____ City/State/Zip _____

3. _____

Send acknowledgement of this gift to: Name _____
Address _____ City/State/Zip _____