

Amateur ham radio operators set to help in an emergency

By **DICK MASON**
The Observer

LA GRANDE — A group of Grande Ronde Valley ham radio operators are helping keep an iconic part of the past alive while securing Union County's future.

The individuals are the members of the Grande Ronde Radio Amateur Association, many of who use Morse code, a communication tool that was all the rage for much of the 1800s when the telegraph was the king of long range communication.

Morse code is used far less frequently today, but many members of the Grande Ronde Radio Association are keeping their Morse code skills sharp because in an emergency sending radio messages via Morse code can be faster and more effective than sending them via voice.

Less radio bandwidth is needed to send messages via Morse code and it can be easier to understand the because it is simpler.

"With Morse code you don't have to deal with the complexity and nuance of voice," said Ted Ivester, of the GRRAA.

Ivester and other members of the club were hard at work keeping their Morse code skills sharp last month while



Joel Hinshaw of the Grande Ronde Radio Amateur Association listens for radio signals June 25, 2022, at Bird Track Springs Campground near La Grande.

participating in American Radio Relay League Field Day, an annual international event, at Bird Track Springs about 5 miles southwest of Hilgard State Park near La Grande.

The amateur radio enthusiasts had a single primary objective — to prepare Union County to have a link to the outside world in the event of a disaster, such as an earthquake, flood or windstorm that could knock out all internet, cellphone or landline communication in the

Grande Ronde Valley. Such a disaster could leave ham radios as the valley's only connection to the outside world.

"We would be the last line of communication," GRRAA member Joel Hinshaw said.

Off the grid

Bird Track Springs Campground was an ideal site for the event because it forces radio operators to function in an environment where they have no access to operational electrical outlets, just as they

might during a natural disaster.

"It is off the grid," GRRAA member Tyson Brooks said.

Brooks said field days provide excellent learning opportunity when they can be in places such as Bird Track Springs.

"It is a simulation of what we need to do to run radios away from civilization," Brooks said.

Radio operators had to rely on batteries and electricity from solar panels and gas fueled generators to

power their equipment.

Many of the operators set up their antennas with the help of fishing reels and poles. Operators loaded reels with fishing line and cast it high into trees to help set up antenna wire. The antenna wire made it easier to reel in signals from throughout the United States and distant countries during the contest period that ran from 11 a.m. June 25 to 11 a.m. June 26.

GRRAA members made 790 contacts during the training. A total of 168 of the contacts were via Morse code, 451 were via voice and 171 digital connections, also described as computer-assisted radio.

A total of 446 contacts were from the 48 contiguous states, five were from Alaska and five were from radio operators in Hawaii. Contacts were made with radio operators in Canada and other foreign countries, including Japan, Indonesia and Uruguay.

No contacts were made with radio operators in Ukraine. GRRAA member Mike Orcutt said many ham operators may be reluctant now to operate their radios because it would give away their location to Russia's military, which invaded Ukraine in February.

"They could triangulate their position, which could make them a target," he said.

Waiting in line

Orcutt, who used a digital system to make contacts, said there were times when it seemed like everything was happening at once.

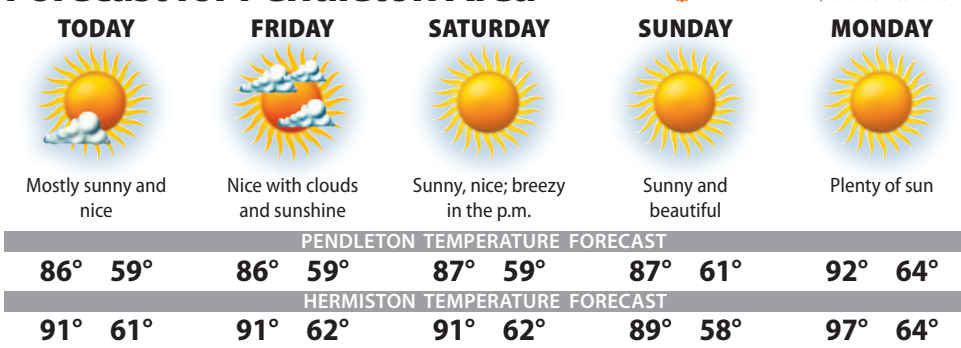
"Sometimes I would be making a contact and I would have three or four others waiting," Orcutt said, explaining that he could see that radio operators were in line via his computer screen.

Contacts between operators were just long enough to exchange bare bones information including the call signs of their club and their location. After an exchange was completed, operators would record the strength of the signal they received.

Brooks said people communicating via ham radio on field days do not tend to get to know each other well because exchanges are short. He said, though, he has made many friends he first met over the air and knows of many others who have become radio buddies.

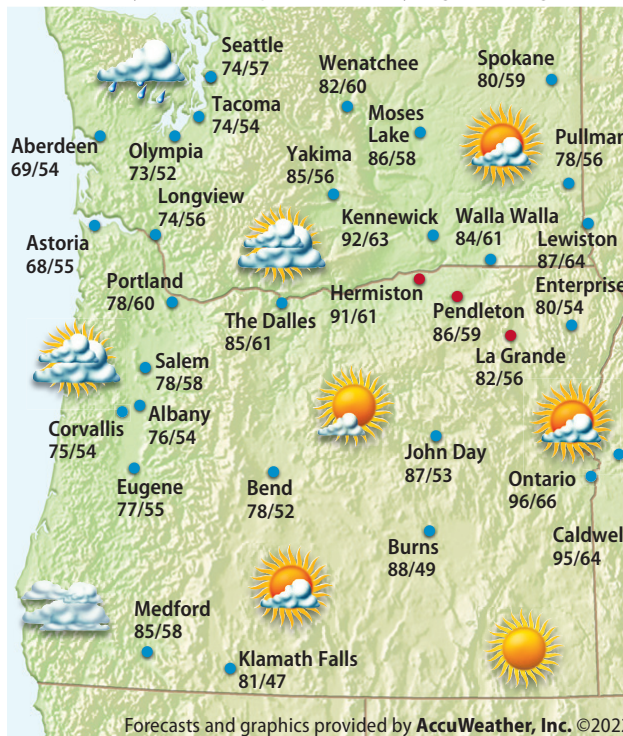
"Some people will meet over the radio and be friends for the rest of their lives even though they may never meet each other in real life," Brooks said.

Forecast for Pendleton Area



OREGON FORECAST

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



ALMANAC

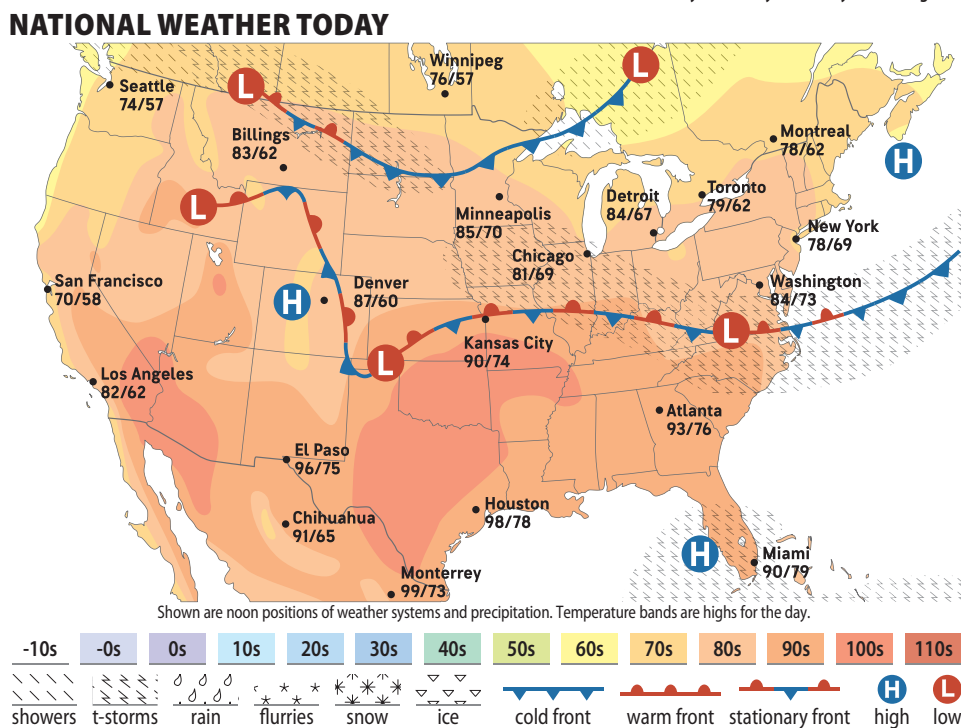
| PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest. | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|------------|
| TEMP. | HIGH | LOW |
| Yesterday | 84° | 60° |
| Normals | 87° | 57° |
| Records | 108° (1968) | 42° (1898) |
| PRECIPITATION | 24 hours ending 3 p.m. | |
| Month to date | Trace | |
| Normal month to date | 0.31" | |
| Year to date | 0.09" | |
| Last year to date | 11.13" | |
| Normal year to date | 4.32" | |
| Normal year to date | 8.04" | |
| HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest. | | |
| TEMP. | HIGH | LOW |
| Yesterday | 86° | 62° |
| Normals | 90° | 57° |
| Records | 105° (1968) | 44° (2010) |
| PRECIPITATION | 24 hours ending 3 p.m. | |
| Month to date | Trace | |
| Normal month to date | 0.03" | |
| Year to date | 0.02" | |
| Last year to date | 7.48" | |
| Normal year to date | 2.46" | |
| Normal year to date | 5.04" | |
| WINDS (in mph) | Today | Fri. |
| Boardman | WSW 7-14 | SW 7-14 |
| Pendleton | W 7-14 | W 6-12 |
| SUN AND MOON | | |
| Sunrise today | 5:14 a.m. | |
| Sunset tonight | 8:46 p.m. | |
| Moonrise today | 2:01 p.m. | |
| Moonset today | 12:45 a.m. | |
| Full | Last | New |
| July 13 | July 20 | July 28 |
| | | Aug 5 |

NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)

High 108° in Enid, Okla. Low 36° in Mammoth Lakes, Calif.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



La Grande man's dog shot while at large

By **ISABELLA CROWLEY**
The Observer

LA GRANDE — Jacob Moseley could not believe what he found.

Moseley found his dog, Waylon, bleeding out from a bullet wound on the evening of June 19 at Moseley's home by Bearco Loop and the Rendezvous RV Park in La Grande. After trying to get the bleeding under control, Moseley rushed Waylon to a veterinarian, where the dog died.

"Our family is devastated at this loss, especially Jacob, who just lost his best friend," said Carrie Hayes, Moseley's sister.

Moseley adopted Waylon as a puppy and the pair would have celebrated three years together in August. Waylon was a red heeler — a breed of Australian cattle dog — and Moseley got him from a breeder in Wallowa.

He remembers picking out Waylon as a puppy. Moseley was surrounded by puppies who all wanted attention, but

he said, Waylon just came up to say hello before going off on his own to nap.

"He had this most gentle nature. I never had a dog or been around a dog so gentle and calm," Moseley said. "He was really well behaved, didn't cause problems, but he did have an issue of getting out and exploring the neighborhood."

The dog was known to escape the yard from time to time. Hayes said that the neighbors knew and loved Moseley's dog.

Patricia Kelly, the animal enforcement officer for the Union County Sheriff's Office, is investigating the shooting. Kelly said she has interviewed residents and people from businesses around the neighborhood. People recalled seeing the dog at large that day, but so far, no one reported seeing or hearing anything about the shooting.

During her investigation, Kelly said she's received mixed messages about Waylon's aggression. When

the dog got out of the yard, he would bark at people and would hold his ground before running away. Some people considered this as aggressive, while others thought it was normal dog behavior.

"It depends on someone's definition of aggressive," she said.

Under Oregon law, dogs are considered personal property. According to Kelly, if a dog is not being aggressive, it is against state law to shoot the animal. If a dog is acting aggressive or actively menacing, a person can shoot the dog in self-defense, but it is still against the law to discharge a firearm within city limits. The shooter is also responsible for proving the dog was actively menacing. It is not enough for the individual to just say the dog was aggressive.

Kelly said that if a perpetrator were found, he or she could be brought up on a number of charges. In a situation like this, if the dog was not acting aggressively, the most likely charge would be aggravated animal abuse.

IN BRIEF

Two Wallowa County properties receive state heritage grants

SALEM — A pair of Wallowa County properties received grants from Oregon Heritage, a division of Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, according to a Friday, July 1, press release.

The Maxville Heritage Interpretive Center received a grant of \$10,000 for a National Register of Historic Places nomination for the former Maxville site. The Wallowa History Center received a \$20,000 grant to repair the exterior of the ranger's office at the historical Bear-Sleds Ranger Station in Wallowa.

In all, Oregon Heritage awarded 20 grants totaling \$293,900 for historic properties and archaeology projects. Six of the grants were awarded in the Diamonds in the Rough category, which fund façade enhancements that restore the historic character of a property. The other 14 grants — including the two in Wallowa County — were in the Preserving Oregon category for properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places and for archaeology projects.

The grants are approved by the State Advisory Committee on Historic Preservation, a nine-member group that reviews nominations to the National Register of Historic Places. The members are professionally recognized

in the fields of history, architecture, archaeology and other related disciplines.

Wolves kill another calf in Wallowa County

MINAM — Another confirmed case of a wolfkilling livestock in Wallowa County was reported last week when a cattle producer in the Minam area found a 4-month-old, 350-pound calf dead, according to a report from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

The calf was found June 27, when the rancher was distributing salt in a partially timbered 6,000-acre private pasture. The calf was believed to have died within 24 hours before the investigation.

Examination of the carcass led ODFW investigators to determine the wounds were consistent with wolf attacks on calves.

The packs known to frequent the area where the attack occurred include the Clark Creek pack, the Bear Creek pack or the Minam pack. ODFW stated it will monitor for continued wolf activity in this area.

On June 17, the ODFW issued a permit to take four more Chesnimnus pack wolves in the Crow Creek area after repeated depredations and the killing of two Chesnimnus wolves under a previous kill permit. The permit is good until July 17.

— EO Media Group

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