

Enterprise Fire responds to blaze on Sunrise Road



Ellen Morris Bishop

ABOVE The kids are alright — Katie Wildman talks with Enterprise Fire Dept. deputy chief Brown while wind whipped snow makes the conversation a bit of a challenge. A neighbor noticed extra smoke coming out of the Wildman's chimney, and they called 911. The fire department was there in less than 10 minutes. "I put the baby and dogs in my truck," Wildman said. "So they are going to be OK." The fire is a good reminder that even as spring approaches, flue fires can be a problem.

RIGHT A cold day for a warm fire: Two Enterprise firefighters inspect the chimney of Grant and Katie Wildman's home on Sunrise Road, west of Enterprise Sunday afternoon, just as the blizzard-like frontal system hit. The home was OK, and the suspected flue fire caused minimal damage.



Jeff Merkley Town Hall touches on broad range of issues

Discussions with the senator included Idaho, Forest management and Snake River dams

By Ellen Morris Bishop
Wallowa County Chieftain

About 100 people filled the newly refurbished South Fork Grange Hall in Lostine on Friday morning to participate in U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley's 407th town hall

meeting. Prior to his public meeting, Merkley spent about 30 minutes listening to and taking with local leaders, including representatives of county government, law enforcement, tribal government and officials and others. The issues discussed included forest management, the 21-inch rule, timber logs (Sen. Merkley pointed to stewardship agreements, which are bolstered in his Wildfire-Resistant Communities Act), the Owyhee wilderness plan, the Snake River dams, restoring fish populations, and diffi-



About 90 people attended Sen Jeff Merkley's Town Hall at the Lostine (South Fork) Grange hall.

DEATH NOTICE

69 year old Larry L. Johnson of Joseph died Feb 19, 2020 at Wallowa Memorial Hospital. Memorial services are planned for Saturday February 29th 1:00pm at the Enterprise Baptist Church. Full obit will follow later.

Bollman Funeral Home entrusted with arrangements.

Verna M. Rhodes

July 18, 1935 - February 12, 2020

Verna M. Rhodes, 84, of Enterprise passed away peacefully on February 12, 2020.

Verna was born on July 18, 1935, to Joy (Fine) and Virgil Winters in Enterprise. The couple divorced, and Joy later married Arthur "Bart" Bartmess. Verna grew up and attended school in Lostine.

Verna married Archie "Bud" Rhodes on February 14, 1952. Bud preceded her in death January 14, 2001. They were reunited in Heaven just in time to celebrate their 68th wedding anniversary and Bud's birthday together.

Verna worked at the Range Rider for 35 years. Upon retiring, she found her true passion in transporting kidney dialysis patients to their doctor's appointments.

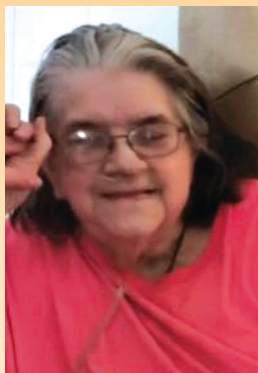
Verna was an avid reader who devoted her life to her children, grandchildren, and taking care of others. Everyone mattered to Verna; she found good in everyone. She had a huge heart, loved unconditionally, and never forgot a name. She was truly a Mother and Grandmother to all. Verna leaves a legacy in everyone who has felt her love.

Verna is preceded in death by her husband, Archie Rhodes; parents, Virgil Winters, Joy and Arthur "Bart" Bartmess; son, Ronald Shane Rhodes; brothers, Gary and Butch Winters; stepbrother, Don Bartmess; brother-in-law, Del LaRue; niece, Traci Clore; and nephew, Brian Boner.

She is survived by her children, Randy Rhodes of La Grande, Mike Rhodes (Raedean) of Enterprise, Teresa Estes (Pete) of Gillette, WY., Debbie Rhodes of Enterprise, and Dawn Phillips of Enterprise; sisters, Linda LaRue of Lone, Corliss Boner (Dale) of Enterprise; step-brother, Dale Bartmess (Shirley) of Hurricane, UT.; step-sister, Diana Snodderly (David) of Lodi, CA.; 15 grandchildren, 30 great-grandchildren, and 3 great-great grandchildren.

At Verna's request, cremation has taken place. A memorial will be held at a later date.

In honor of Verna's love for books and children, the family is requesting memorial contributions be made to help buy books for children to Enterprise Elementary, 201 SE 4th St., Enterprise, OR 97828. Please add in memory of Verna Rhodes in the memo line. Memorial contributions can also be made to Community Connection Meals on Wheels in Enterprise.



culty recruiting folks for the District Attorney's office in Wallowa County.

At his town Hall meetings, Merkley recognizes a local organization for its community work. On Friday, he presented a U.S. Flag to the South Fork Lostine Grange board of Directors.

Audience questions ranged widely across the political spectrum. Several people brought up the need for resolution--and breaching -- of the four Lower Snake River dams. Merkley's response was cautious and muted, but he said he was open to learning more about that issue.

Overcoming the East-side/West-side divisions and animosity also came up, especially in the context of the rising Greater Idaho movement. One of most animated portions of the town hall followed question by Lostine resident John Polard about why people in rural Oregon didn't recognize and appreciate the fact that the money for many state services and infrastructure, including roads and schools, came from the west side as well as the east side, along with federal funding.

Merkley also talked about his upcoming wild-

fire initiative bill and efforts to allocate more funds for treatments, including thinning and to a lesser extent, prescribed burning, that will reduce fire risks. Undergrowth and ladder fuels in crowded and over-grown forests. Merkley wants more funds allocated to fuels reduction. He said that he thought reducing fuel loads would save more in the long term, rather than devoting massive amounts of USFS budget dollars and federal assistance to fighting wildfires in a tinderbox.

Due to an ever more chaotic climate, the risk of severe and catastrophic fires only grows. In 2017, 71,500 wildfires burned 10 million acres nationwide, the second-largest figure on record in terms of acreage burned. In 2018, nearly 9 million acres burned. The problem is the Forest Service lacks the funding and the boots on the ground to implement badly need fuels reduction projects.

Year after year, fire suppression eats up more and more of the Forest Service's budget and personnel. Between 1998 and 2016, the number of Forest Service fire personnel grew by over 6,000 employees. At

the same time, the number of employees for other critical work, like planning timber sales, thinning projects, trail maintenance, decreased by 7,000. The result: Less resources for proactive forest management and a multi-million acre backlog of projects.

Merkley, in a press release noted that communities have been threatened by increasingly severe wildfires. "Even communities not directly impacted by flames were inundated with smoke. We must do more to reduce the risk of catastrophic blazes. We can accomplish this by investing in more fuels reduction, empowering local communities, and expanding opportunities to collaborate."

Merkley's proposed Wildfire-Resilient Communities Act would create economic opportunities in forest-dependent communities while reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfires by:

- Creating a \$1 billion fund to provide stability and allow the Forest Service to increase the pace and scale of catastrophic wildfire reduction projects.

- Empowering federal agencies to work with local communities to plan and prepare for wildfires.

- Permanently reauthorizing the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program and allows more projects to receive funding in a given fiscal year.

- Creating a County Stewardship Fund that would provide payments to counties equal to 25% of stewardship contract receipts on federal land within their counties.

Merkley departed for his next town hall in Elgin around 10 a.m. with lots of questions still on people's minds. However, he noted that this had been one of the most philosophical and least contentious town hall meetings he has done recently.

Humans emitting more methane than previously thought

Benjamin Hmiel
University of Rochester

Methane is a powerful greenhouse gas and large contributor to global warming. Methane emissions to the atmosphere have increased by approximately 150 percent over the past three centuries. Heat-trapping gases like methane can be emitted naturally, as well as from human activity.

University of Rochester researchers Benjamin Hmiel, and colleagues measured methane levels in ancient air samples and found that scientists have been vastly underestimating the amount of methane humans are emitting into the atmosphere via fossil fuels.



Jakub Fryš/Wikipedia Commons
Methane rising from the lake bottom forms frozen bubbles in Canada's Abrams Lake.

"Placing stricter methane emission regulations on the fossil fuel industry will have the potential to reduce future global warming to a larger extent than previously thought," Hmiel says.

Weather Forecast

Courtesy of Weather Underground • wunderground.com

	High	Low	Conditions
Feb. 27	49	31	Sunny
Feb. 28	55	35	Mostly Sunny
Feb. 29	45	27	PM showers
March 1	39	24	Partly cloudy
March 2	43	30	PM snow showers
March 3	39	26	Snow showers
March 4	38	25	Partly cloudy

Phases of the moon

March 2	March 9	March 16	March 24
1st Quarter	Full Moon	Last Quarter	New Moon

WALLOWA COUNTY SUNRISE & SUNSET FEB. 27 - MARCH 4
(from the U.S. Naval Observatory)

THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUES	WED
6:34	6:33	6:29	6:27	6:25	6:24	6:22
5:30	5:31	5:34	5:36	5:37	5:38	5:40