

# Local, State & Nation

LA GRANDE BUSINESS DONATES HOT TUB TO BAKER CITY BOY WITH SPINA BIFIDA



Max Denning/The (La Grande) Observer

At their Baker City home, 4-year-old Henry Macy, left, and his 2-year-old brother, Augustus, play in the hot tub donated by Claudson's Sew and Soak of La Grande. Augustus, who has spina bifida, uses the hot tub for physical therapy.

## Heartwarming donation

■ Hot tub is fun, but it also serves as a therapy pool for 2-year-old Augustus Macy

By Max Denning  
The (La Grande) Observer

LA GRANDE — Thanks to the generosity of strangers, 2-year-old Augustus Macy has his very own hot tub.

While he might seem quite young for such a gift, the hot tub functions as a therapy pool as well as a playground.

Born with a birth defect known as spina bifida, Augustus doesn't have the use of his legs. He had five surgeries before he was 10 months old. Prior to this summer, Augustus was going to Baker Valley Physical Therapy once a week to do exercises in a warm therapy pool.

Augustus' therapists recommended he use the warm therapy pool several times a week for short periods of time. That, coupled with the fact that he was quickly using up the allotted yearly amount

of physical therapy sessions covered by his insurance, led his mother, Karla Macy, to search for another option.

"We were looking for something that we could have at home that would work for him," Karla said.

At the beginning of May, Karla began writing letters about her son and his need for warm water therapy to stores that sold hot tubs in Boise and one in La Grande — Claudson's Sew and Soak.

Greg and Sandi Gross, owners of Claudson's Sew and Soak, received the letter and were immediately impacted by it.

"As soon as I got the letter, I showed it to Greg and he said 'Let's do this,'" Sandi said.

"I just read the letter and it just touched me," Greg said.

Greg and Sandi have a son, Joey, now 30, who was born with a heart defect and had to have open-heart surgery at 7 weeks old. Both Greg and Sandi said the experience with their son made them more empathetic to the situation the Macys were in.

"Little kids with medical issues kind of touch us more, you could say," Sandi said.

The Grosses quickly decided to donate a hot tub to Augustus.

"I could tell they really wanted to help us because they've been through a similar situation," Karla said. Since getting the hot tub, the Macys were able to cancel all of Augustus' pool therapy sessions for the summer. This has allowed the family to take Augustus to Portland for monthly physical therapy sessions at Shri-

ners Hospital for Children in July and August. Augustus sees therapists there twice a day for a week at a time.

Karla and Levi, Augustus' parents, help him through stretches and exercises in the hot tub several times a week. Sometimes Augustus' 4-year-old brother, Henry, gets in the hot tub with him.

"He's doing really well. He's got a bunch of different mobility devices and he tears around in all of them," Levi said.

Karla said Augustus was excited to get the hot tub at home.

"It's also just nice that he can move around in here and play a little bit more like a typical kid would," Karla said.

Even when he's not in the hot tub, "he's a super happy kid," Karla said.

## Some charges dropped in Finicum shooting

PORTLAND (AP) — A federal judge has thrown out two of the five charges against an FBI agent who allegedly lied about firing two rifle shots at the pickup of an Oregon refuge occupation spokesman at a roadblock in January 2016.

The Oregonian/OregonLive reports U.S. District Judge Robert E. Jones on Monday struck one count of making a false statement and one count of obstruction of justice against W. Joseph Astarita.

In a trial set to start next week, Astarita still faces two counts of making a false state-

ment and one count of obstruction of justice in the incident in which he allegedly fired two errant shots at the truck driven by Robert "La Voy" Finicum.

Astarita has pleaded not guilty.

Finicum was a spokesman for the Ammon Bundy-led group that took over the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge to oppose federal control of land in the western U.S. The disputed gunshots came as he emerged from his pickup as police moved in to arrest the leaders of the armed occupation.

Astarita, a member of the FBI's elite Hostage Rescue Team, is accused of falsely denying he fired one bullet that went through the pickup's roof and another that went astray, investigators said.

Moments later, two state troopers fatally shot Finicum.

Prosecutors say forensic evidence, as well as audio and video recordings, will prove that Astarita fired the errant shots and then lied to FBI supervisors and state police investigators.

Astarita's lawyers counter that the government's case is based on weak circumstantial evidence.

"The government has no eyewitness who will testify that they saw Special Agent Astarita shoot. The government

has no video recordings showing that Astarita shot. And the government has no ballistics evidence matching a bullet to Special Agent Astarita's firearm," defense lawyers wrote in their trial brief.

The judge dismissed a count that alleged Astarita made a false statement by giving a snide response at the shooting scene to a FBI supervisory special agent. The judge ruled that the remark didn't constitute a false statement.

The judge also dismissed an allegation stemming from a group interview of FBI agents who had been at the shooting scene. When asked by state police if any of the agents had fired shots, a supervisory FBI special agent responded that none of them had.

## Oregon woman survives 7 days after her car plunged off cliff

By Michael Balsamo  
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — An Oregon woman who was badly injured and stranded for a week after her Jeep plunged 250 feet over a cliff into the ocean near Big Sur in California says she survived by drinking fresh water dripping from moss until she was rescued by a couple hiking along the beach.

From her hospital bed, 23-year-old Angela Hernandez posted a detailed account Sunday night on Facebook of her survival after the crash.

The Portland woman said she spent each day walking the isolated stretch of beach, searching for help, and was unable to make her way back up to the highway.

She said she had a brain hemorrhage, collapsed lung, broken ribs and collarbones, and severe sunburn.

"For her to survive for seven days on the coast with waves crashing over you at times, with injuries that she had, is amazing," Monterey County Sheriff Steve Bernal said. "She was a fighter. She had the will to survive and I think most people in that situation probably wouldn't have lasted that long."

Hernandez had been driving to her sister's home in Lancaster, near Los Angeles, on July 6 when a small animal crossed in front of her, causing her to swerve and lose control of her car, she wrote.

"The only thing I really remember after that was waking up. I was still in my car and I could feel water rising over my knees. My head hurt and when I touched it, I found blood on my hands."

She said she broke a window of her car, jumped into the ocean and swam ashore. She fell asleep on the beach and realized what had happened after she woke up.

Her shoulders, hips, back and thighs were radiating pain and all she could see was the cliff, rocks and ocean.

"People don't normally survive plunges down the Big Sur coast like this. She is very lucky," Bernal said.

In the days that followed, Hernandez walked the beach searching for help, climbing on rocks to avoid sharp sand and walking on the shore to get away from hot rocks, she said.

"I found a high spot I was able to climb up to and found myself there almost every day," Hernandez wrote. "I could see cars driving across the cliff and felt like if I could yell just loud enough, that one could hear or see me. That's all it would take to make it back to my family. Just one person noticing me."

Rescue crews had searched the area and found no obvious signs that a car had gone over a cliff, Bernal said.

By the third day, Hernandez's jeans were torn, her socks had holes and she knew she was dehydrated. She made her way back to her car and found a 10-inch radiator hose that had fallen from the car during the crash.

"I walked farther south down the beach than I ever had before and heard a dripping sound," she wrote on Facebook. "I looked up and saw a huge patch of moss with water dripping down from it. I caught the water in my hands and tasted it. It was fresh!!!!"

She said she developed a daily ritual of walking the beach in search of new high ground, screaming for help at the top of her lungs and collecting fresh water.

"It would be a lie to say that things got easier as the days passed," she wrote. "They never did. But, they sure got predictable."

Everything changed on Friday, when Hernandez woke up and saw a woman walking across the shore.

"I thought it was a dream," she wrote. "I screamed, 'HEEEELLLLLPPPPP' and then got up as quickly as I could and ran over to her."

Chelsea and Chad Moore were hiking and looking for places to fish when they spotted Hernandez's wrecked car and then her. Chelsea Moore ran and got help as her husband stayed with Hernandez and gave her fresh water.

"We just kind of panicked and were like, 'Oh my God, you were in that car we just saw and are alive,'" Chelsea Moore told KION-TV in Monterey County.

Chelsea Moore made her way to a camp and called 911 before spotting a missing person handout with Hernandez's photo.

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