

Local & State

LINDA

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Peterson helped stock small food pantries and Little Libraries placed around town to help others, Wilson said.

She and Lane saw the need for more resources because of the limited services they knew were available to Peterson.

Whereas food boxes are distributed once or twice a month, the pantries will be available at any time, they said. And they will provide information about where people can go to find other assistance in the community.

With the help of Wilson's husband, Steve, who works for his parents at Wilson's Cabinet Shop in Halfway, Peterson's daughter and sister plan to place pantries in private yards around Baker City, Halfway and possibly La Grande. And they will work to keep the pantries stocked with items donated to "Linda's Hope."

Chief Duman spoke in support of the effort.

"It's great for the family to be proactive in potentially helping other people who have issues similar to Linda's," Duman said.

Donations will be collected at drop sites at the Baker City Police Department, 1768 Auburn Ave., and at New Directions Northwest Behavioral Health and Wellness, 2200 Fourth St., from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday; at the Cornucopia Coffee House, 280 S. Main St., in Halfway, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday; and at a La Grande site to be announced.

Wilson and Lane are especially looking for nonper-

"This is something to keep me busy and somewhere to put my emotions. This is what (Mom) always wanted to do — to help everybody."

— Alesia Wilson, Linda Peterson's daughter

ishable food items, hygiene/toiletry items, warm winter items for adults and children and yarn to be used by volunteers who have offered to crochet hats.

And they'll be seeking donations of books.

Wilson said her mother loved books and used information she gained by reading about a wide variety of topics to help others.

"When she's clean and taking her medication, she's able to do anything," Lane said of her older sister.

But when she isn't, it's her "loud mouth" that gets her into trouble, Lane said.

"She'll let you know what's on her mind," she said.

Peterson's loud and boisterous behavior resulted in her being banned from many places in Baker City designed to provide her with some of the help she needed or even places to come in out of the weather for short periods.

And when she wasn't causing trouble for herself in that way, Peterson's generosity sometimes left her without food or money, her daughter said.

"She helped people very much to the point that she was very easily manipulated," Wilson said.

"She would 'lose' her (food stamp benefit) cards," Wilson said.

That usually meant they had been stolen or she'd been manipulated into giving them away.

That was one reason Wilson took over guardianship for her mother two years ago after Peterson left treatment at Juniper Ridge Acute Care Center in John Day. Wilson helped her mother get set up in an apartment and Peterson worked to stay clean and sober in order to spend time with her grandchildren.

So when she failed to show up for Wilson's daughter's dance recital in March, Wilson knew immediately that something was seriously wrong.

"I came to town and I couldn't find her," Wilson said. "Nobody had seen her."

Peterson routinely went to the Idle Hour tavern in the mornings for coffee and to buy single cigarettes (one of the last places in town that provides that service, Wilson said). And she had friends who she visited routinely or whose houses she helped clean. No one had seen her.

Since here mother went missing in March, Wilson said she's received hundreds of messages and stories of what she's done for people. "She touched a lot of people's lives in this town," Wilson said.

The women plan to honor Peterson's memory and dedication to helping others in another way. They'll place painted rocks — a pastime Peterson enjoyed using her artistic ability on — in the pantries. They hope those suffering with addiction and mental health issues will carry one with them.

"They can put it in their pocket and pull it out and re-

Police Seeking Public's Help In Search For Linda Peterson

Anyone with information about Peterson is asked to call officer Shannon Regan of the Baker City Police Department at 541-523-3644 or email her at sregan@bakercity.com

member: That's what caused her to go missing," Wilson said.

One of Peterson's dreams was to become stable enough to serve as a peer counselor at Shelter From the Storm in Island City or at MayDay in Baker City, where she had volunteered in the past. Both agencies offer services to domestic violence and sexual assault victims.

"It was always Mom's hope to help people — to get them to recovery and get them out of any negative situation," Wilson said.

More information about Linda's Hope is available on Facebook. Those who want to donate to the project or who have a need for specific items may leave a message for Wilson or Lane on the page or call Wilson at 541-519-1322.

They plan to distribute fliers about the effort as it continues and hope to schedule a community vigil for Peterson as well as fundraising events and other projects.

"This is something to keep me busy and somewhere to put my emotions," Wilson said. "This is what (Mom) always wanted to do — to help everybody."

LOCAL BRIEFING

Friends of Heritage Museum meet Oct. 24

The general fall meeting for the Friends of Baker Heritage Museum is set for Oct. 24 from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. at the Museum, 2480 Grove St.

Crossroads seeks entries for two art shows

Crossroads Carnegie Art Center is inviting all artists to submit works for the annual Ornament Expo that opens Nov. 1. Crossroads will accept ornaments throughout the holiday season from Oct. 21 through Dec. 20.

All artists who enter the "Ornament Expo" will be given a \$10 Crossroads gift certificate

The yearly exhibition "Christmas at Crossroads-The Gift of Art" opens Dec. 6. Crossroads is looking for fine art and fine crafts including paintings, clay, fiber art, glass, wood, metal, mixed media, jewelry, hand-painted signs, scarves, hats, collage, soap, small sculptural pieces, and holiday cards of high quality and locally hand-crafted.

Entries can be submitted on Monday, Dec. 2, from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

For both shows there is no entry fee and all items must be available for sale but a commission (30% for members and 40% nonmembers) will be collected on items sold during the show. Both exhibitions will end Dec. 27 and artists will collect their art that day from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. For all of the exhibit information and an entry form, go to www.crossroads-arts.org then, look for "Quick Forms" at the bottom of our home page. Click on "Ornament Expo 2019" and "Christmas at Crossroads — The Gift of Art 2019" to view details and to print the entry form. For questions, call Crossroads at 541-523-5369.

Heritage Museum extends deadline for nominations for Central Gallery exhibit

The Baker Heritage Museum has extended through the end of October its open nominations for extraordinary women to be included in the Museum's 2020-21 Central Gallery exhibit — "Extraordinary Women of Baker County & North Powder."

The original deadline for nominations was Oct. 1.

Nominations are limited to women who have passed away. Nomination forms should list reasons why the nominee made a difference in the history of the Baker County or North Powder areas.

You can drop off nominations at the Heritage Museum, 2480 Grove St., which is open daily through Oct. 26 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Nominations can also be sent by email to museum@bakercity.org, or mailed to the Museum. More information is available by calling the Museum at 541-523-9308.

LAWSUIT

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Vicki VanCleave filed the lawsuit on behalf of herself and the couple's children, Tara Hett and Jennifer Cunningham, beneficiaries of George VanCleave's estate.

Her husband died when he was struck by a round from Toubeaux's loaded .300 Weatherby Magnum rifle as Toubeaux was preparing the gun for transport. Baker County authorities ruled VanCleave's death "a tragic accident."

Vicki VanCleave accuses Toubeaux of negligence on the grounds that he "knew or should have known that his rifle was loaded with a round in the chamber, that the rifle's safety was not engaged, and that the barrel of the rifle was pointing at (her husband)."

The two men had driven to the area in Toubeaux's 2001 F350 crew cab pickup truck and VanCleave had ridden in the passenger seat, the complaint states. After looking around the property for elk, the men returned to the vehicle and placed their rifles in the back passenger compartment.

Toubeaux's loaded rifle was placed in the back seat with the barrel pointed at the rear

passenger door, the complaint states. After a while VanCleave got out of the truck with his rifle, and walked from the truck to continue elk hunting.

When he returned to the vehicle, he opened the rear passenger door and loaded his rifle into the truck for transport, the complaint states.

Next Toubeaux got out of his vehicle to prepare his rifle for travel because the men were planning to drive from the area for dinner.

That is when VanCleave was shot, according to the lawsuit, which states:

"Upon grabbing his rifle from the back seat of the vehicle to ensure that it was unloaded and in a safe condition for transport, the rifle went off. The bullet struck and killed (VanCleave) while he was in the process of loading his own rifle and equipment into the truck."

In her demand for a jury trial, Vicki VanCleave details the monetary loss to her family, including up to \$10,000 in burial expenses and other economic loss of up to \$200,000.

She also claims that because of Toubeaux's negligence, she and her children have suffered and will continue to suffer "loss of society, companionship, and services" of VanCleave, in noneconomic damages of up to \$750,000.00.

She is represented by Bend attorney Wayne D. Hawn.

Redmond couple guilty of murder in daughter's starvation death

By Garrett Andrews

The (Bend) Bulletin

A Redmond couple was found guilty Friday of the starvation murder of their 5-year-old daughter, Maliyha Hope Garcia, who weighed 24 pounds when she died Dec. 21, 2016.

The jury returned in the case of Estevan Adrian Garcia and Sacora Rose Horn-Garcia after roughly half a day of deliberation, finding them both guilty of murder by abuse and two counts of criminal mistreatment.

A sentencing hearing will be Nov. 18 in Deschutes County Circuit Court. The presumptive sentence they face is life in prison with parole possible after 25 years. The mistreatment charges each carry a presumptive sentence of 5 years, meaning the couple might have to wait 35 years before a shot at release.

"We're ecstatic," said Barb Cook, Garcia's aunt and guardian of five of Maliyha's older sisters. "He is guilty."

The five-week trial was described by parties involved as intense and grueling, with expert testimony on starvation and child scapegoating and more than 25,000 text messages that offered a candid look at a seemingly normal household roiled by mental illness and abuse.

The abuse didn't happen in a day, a week or even a month.

For nearly a year and a half, as Horn-Garcia experienced several mental breakdowns, the stepmother forced Maliyha to "use her words" to ask for everything, most notably food, though also to wake, leave her room

and to go to the bathroom.

Horn-Garcia regularly forced Maliyha to miss meals for not "using her words," and in summer 2016, the abuse accelerated when the couple pulled Maliyha out of day care, according to trial testimony.

Though he was once seen as a doting father to Maliyha, the text messages show Garcia continually gave in to his wife's increasingly cruel disciplining of Maliyha.

One evidentiary exhibit that factored prominently in the case was a growth chart showing Maliyha's weight compared to others in her age cohort.

On it, a red line signifying Maliyha proceeds upward through time alongside her peers, until it starts to level off in about January 2015 and declines drastically around summer 2016.

A blue line cuts perpendicular about January 2015. It represents when Garcia married Horn-Garcia.

The abuse culminated in a 911 call Dec. 21, 2016. Horn-Garcia told the dispatcher her girl was "sick" and had suddenly lost consciousness. But more than a dozen police officers and medical professionals testified the girl was dead when the first units arrived at the family's home. Starvation was determined to be the cause of death.

Cook and her husband, Russ, also raised Garcia for a time, and helped facilitate Maliyha's adoption by Garcia when she was born and tested positive for meth.

They watched Garcia change after

he married Horn-Garcia.

"He went from a loving father to not a loving father," Russ Cook said. "We opened our house to him, and he distanced himself from his family immediately (after meeting Horn-Garcia)."

After the verdict was read, relatives of Horn-Garcia wept leaving the courthouse, while a plainclothes detective high-fived prosecutor Stacy Neil.

A judge's order preventing parties from speaking to the media remains in effect until sentencing.

"Gag order," was all District Attorney John Hummel texted when asked for comment.

Garcia's brother, Carlos, told The Bulletin he feels conflicted at the verdict.

"I feel that, yes, he should be punished for his part in what happened — and he should have got him and her out of there — but I don't feel he should have been found guilty of the same charges as her," Carlos Garcia said. "But I am happy that justice was served and we can start to let all this go."

For a time, before his brother met Horn-Garcia, Carlos Garcia helped raise Maliyha in Redmond.

Carlos Garcia lives in Salem. He said it's been painful watching outsiders during the trial blame his family for not acting to save Maliyha.

He said he asks God regularly to wake him and tell him "it was all just a dream."

"I just really hurt in all this," he said.

St. Francis turkey dinner set for Nov. 3

The annual St. Francis Turkey Dinner is scheduled Sunday, Nov. 3.

Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for children

Two meal sessions are scheduled. The first starts at 2 p.m. and a second will begin at 4 p.m. at St. Francis parish hall, 2235 First St.

Tickets are available from Jody Colton by calling 541-519-0162 or the parish office at 541-523-4521.

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Spaghetti Dinner at 6 PM, followed by Auction
Tickets \$15 adults, \$12 youth age 12 & under

Tickets available at Betty's Books
Proceeds benefit Powder Pals Dog & Feral Cat Spay/Neuter Programs

Questions? Call 541-403-2710