

Local & Region

What's New At The Library

• 2400 Resort St.

FICTION

- "David Wolf mystery series," Jeff Carson
- "Darkdown," Jay Kristoff
- "Sword of Kings," Bernard Cornwell
- "The Library of the Unwritten," A. J. Hackwith
- "A Cry from the Dust," Carrie Stuart Parks

NONFICTION

- "I Am C-3PO," Anthony Daniels
- "How to Sell Your Art Online," Cory Huff
- "Grit & Grace," Tim McGraw
- "Face It," Debbie Harry
- "Exonerated," Dan Bongino

DVDS

- "Abominable (Family)"
- "Ad Astra" (Sci-Fi)
- "Downton Abbey: the Motion Picture" (TV series)
- "It, Chapter Two" (Horror)
- "Overcomer" (Drama)

Tumbleweeds trap traffic

By Annette Cary
Tri-City Herald

RICHLAND, Wash. — Thousands of blowing tumbleweeds trapped cars driving on State Route 240 northwest of Richland on New Year's Eve.

The tumbleweeds were so deep and thick that the state Department of Transportation had to bring out plow trucks to clear the roadway, according to the Washington State Patrol.

The highway was closed for about 10 hours, from Tuesday evening through about 4:30 a.m. New Year's Day.

WSP Trooper Chris Thorson posted on Twitter about 8:30 p.m. that several cars had become trapped in tumbleweeds.

One driver called the state patrol to report she had abandoned her car in a ditch and gotten a ride with another driver, but the tumbleweeds were so deep the state patrol had not been able to find her car by 2:30 a.m.

The state Department of Transportation plow trucks were leaving piles of the weeds along the roadsides 20 to 30 feet high in places, Thorson said.

"No collisions. No injuries,"



Washington State Patrol photo

A monster pile of tumbleweeds forced a 10-hour closure of State Route 240 in Eastern Washington on New Year's Eve, trapping several drivers before they could be freed by state Department of Transportation workers.

Thorson posted about 2:30 a.m. "The plow truck drivers also did a great job of working around abandoned vehicles without hitting them, which was a daunting task as they were very hard to see in the thick brush."

After daylight, Department of Transportation workers found and unburied a car at the side of the highway that had been hidden from sight after plowing topped the roof of the car with several feet of tumbleweeds. No one was in it.

The road closure at its

peak was about 20 miles long. Lanes in both directions were closed from State Route 225 about 10 miles northwest of Richland to State Route 24.

The National Weather Station reported wind gusts coming from the west at 30 to 40 mph throughout most of the night in the area.

To the west of the closed section of road is the open land of the Hanford Reach National Monument; to the east is the production portion of the Hanford nuclear reservation.

ARREST

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Baker County Sheriff's Office deputies searched Gonyer's property at 35002 Stices Gulch Road, about 12 miles south of Baker City, on Dec. 24, according to a press release from the Sheriff's Office.

The Sheriff's Office applied for the search warrant after receiving a report on Dec. 12 regarding the sexual abuse of a minor. After conducting the search, deputies learned that Gonyer was in Boise, and they worked with Idaho police to arrange for Gonyer to be arrested.

The case will next go to a Baker

County grand jury.

Gonyer is currently charged with these crimes, totalling 20 separate counts related to the sexual assault of a child: first-degree rape; second-degree rape; third-degree rape; first-degree sexual abuse, two counts; second-degree sexual abuse, two counts; third-degree sexual abuse, two counts; first-degree sodomy, two counts; second-degree sodomy, two counts; third-degree sodomy; second-degree unlawful sexual penetration, two counts; using a child in display of sexually explicit conduct; luring a minor; and contributing to the sexual delinquency of a minor, two counts.

Eleven of the charges carry mandatory minimum prison sentences upon conviction. They are each count of first-degree sodomy, sexual abuse and rape, Class A felonies, eight years and four months in prison; using a child in display of sexually explicit conduct, also a Class A felony, five years and 10 months; and second-degree sodomy, sexual abuse and rape, Class B felonies, which carry mandatory minimum prison terms of six years and three months.

The Baker County Sheriff's Office was assisted by the Ada County Sheriff's Office, Idaho State Police, and the Boise VA Medical Center Police.

LOCAL BRIEFING

Boy Scouts picking up Christmas trees

Local Boy Scouts will be picking up Christmas trees in Baker City on Saturday, Jan. 4. Residents should leave their tree at the curb or near the street. Donations will be accepted.

Chamber awards banquet Jan. 11

The 90th annual Baker County Chamber of Commerce Awards Banquet is set for Saturday, Jan. 11, at 5:30 p.m. at the Baker Elks Lodge, 1896 Second St.

Tickets are \$40 and are available at the Chamber, 490 Campbell St. More information is available by calling 541-523-5855.

Farmers Market meeting set for Feb. 5

The Baker City Farmers Market will have its annual membership meeting on Feb. 5 at 6 p.m. at the Baker County Library, 2400 Resort St. Anyone who wants to help the market be successful in 2020 is welcome to join.

OTEC changes design of monthly bills

Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative has changed the design of its monthly bills.

Features of the new design include areas highlighted in red or yellow to make them easier to see. These include account number, total amount due, due date, remaining balance (if any) and the date on which power could be disconnected due to charges.

The graph at the upper right corner of the bill, which shows each member's energy usage over the past year, has been revised as well.

More information is available on OTEC's website, www.otec.coop, by clicking on "Sample Bill."

Programs at Interpretive Center

The BLM's Oregon Trail Interpretive Center is open Thursday through Sunday, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., with a variety of programs and pioneer demonstrations scheduled.

The Center, just north of Highway 86 about 5 miles east of Baker City, offers a pioneer story program at 2 p.m. on Thursdays and Saturdays, and pioneer demonstrations Fridays and Sundays at 2 p.m. A ranger-led program, "Oregon Fever!" is offered at 11 a.m. each day Thursday through Sunday.

The Center's network of 4.2 miles of paved trails is open every day from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Trails are not cleared of snow.

RODEO

Continued from Page 1A

"This is a big deal for our community, and we just didn't want it to go away," Pierce said. "We believe we have the right person who can take this horse by the reins and take us forward, hopefully into greener pastures."

The goal, Pierce said, is

that "you'll get the same show you've always got, if not better."

Jason Mattox of Roseburg started the Coastal Farm & Ranch Challenge of Champions Tour (cct-bullriding.com)

The company has been producing bull-riding events for more than a decade, according to its website.

Variety of new laws now in effect in Oregon

By Jade McDowell
East Oregonian

Several new Oregon laws take effect with the start of the new year, including measures aimed at making voting as easy as possible for Oregon voters. Others address plastic bags, revenge porn and marijuana convictions.

When a new year starts, it can be easy to miss the memo on changes to the law. Ignorance of the law is not a defense for breaking it, however, so here are a few handy guidelines for 2020:

Sales tax

In July, Washington stopped granting Oregonians an exemption to sales tax at the register. But as of Jan. 1, Oregon residents who have been saving their receipts can file a tax return for the amount of sales tax they paid to Washington in 2019.

To qualify, applicants must be a resident of a state that does not have sales tax, must have purchased the items for use outside of Washington, and must be requesting reimbursement for more than \$25 in taxes paid (at 6.5% state sales tax, that means spending at least \$384.62 on qualifying items). They will have to submit receipts and information about the time and place of each purchase, in addition to proof of residency.

Each person is only allowed to apply for reimbursement once per calendar year, for taxes paid in the previous year.

According to the Washington Department of Revenue's media relations office, the necessary forms will go online in January under the "general public" heading on their

home page. For now, what information is available can be found at dor.wa.gov/find-taxes-rates/retail-sales-tax/sales-nonresidents.

Plastic bags

Starting Jan. 1, stores will no longer be able to give out single-use plastic bags at check-out, although bags used for meat and produce will be exempt. Stores will also be required to charge at least 5 cents per bag for paper, reusable bags or other alternatives.

Real ID

As of Oct. 1, 2020, regular Oregon driver's licenses will no longer be valid to board a commercial flight, enter a secure federal facility, such as a military base, or do other activities where a federally approved form of identification is required.

After Oct. 1, Oregonians who want to take a flight will have to use another form of approved identification, such as a passport, or apply for a new type of driver's license called a Real ID. The state hopes to have the federally approved Real IDs available through the Department of Motor Vehicles starting in July after finishing a "major IT overhaul," according to the department's website.

Real IDs will be optional, and those getting them will be required to pay the DMV's fee for replacement of a driver's license, plus a yet-to-be-determined additional Real ID fee. The newly issued Real ID will have the same expiration date as the person's current driver's license, so people whose licenses expire soon after the Real IDs

are available are advised they may want to wait until it is time to renew their license.

Should someone choose not to upgrade to a Real ID, a standard Oregon driver's licenses will still be good for activities, such as driving, purchasing alcohol, registering to vote or applying for benefits.

Voting

In 2020, Oregon will continue its quest to make voting as convenient as possible by not charging for postage to mail in ballots. During the next election, Oregonians will simply be able to drop their ballot in the mail without a stamp.

Bicycling

Starting Jan. 1, bicyclists are allowed to proceed through an intersection with a stop sign or traffic signal without stopping, providing they proceed at a safe speed and yield to vehicles and pedestrians.

Revenge porn

As of 2020, it will be a crime in Oregon to distribute intimate photos or videos of a person without their consent. The photos or videos qualify as revenge porn under the law if they show a person's "intimate parts" or show them engaging in a sex act, the subject is identifiable, they did not give permission and could reasonably be expected to be "harassed, humiliated or injured by the disclosure."

Previously, the law only covered posting such content to a website, but now adds any other methods of dissemination, such as text message,

email, private messaging in apps or handing out physical copies. It also allows victims to sue for up to \$5,000 in damages. The crime is a Class A misdemeanor for a first offense and Class C felony if the perpetrator has a prior record of such offenses.

Calling 911

Using the police as a weapon to harass someone will be a risky move starting Jan. 1, as a law takes effect allowing people to seek civil damages from someone who summoned police with the intent to infringe on the person's rights, discriminate against them, cause them to feel harassed or embarrassed, expel them from a place where they are legally allowed to be or damage their reputation or financial standing.

The law was put in place to address reports of incidents in which white callers called 911 on people of color for legal activities, such as holding a barbecue.

Marijuana convictions

Starting in January, the aptly named Senate Bill 420 will allow people with past marijuana convictions to petition to clear their record. The bill was passed in recognition that while Oregon legalized possession of user amounts of recreational marijuana in 2015, many people have criminal records based on possession pre-2015. Those convictions, for something that is now legal,

can hold them back from obtaining jobs and housing.

After Jan. 1, people who have "qualifying marijuana convictions" can petition the court to set aside their conviction and seal the record, making it as if it never happened. As long as the conviction fits under the definition laid out by the law, the court must grant the motion.

A qualifying conviction means the person was found to possess less than 1 ounce of marijuana or other behavior described in ORS 475B.301, the offense happened before July 1, 2015, and the person fully complied with the requirements of their sentence.

Employment

Employees in Oregon will receive a variety of new protections in January.

Pregnant workers will be among those who receive new protections under the law. Employers will be required to provide reasonable accommodations, such as assistance with manual labor or more frequent bathroom breaks, to pregnant employees. They will also be prohibited from denying someone employment, requiring them to take a leave of absence or otherwise retaliating or discriminating against them for requesting accommodations for their pregnancy.

Employers will also be required to create anti-harassment policies for their workplace, and will no longer

JANUARY 3 - 9

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LITTLE
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FRI-SUN: (12:45) (3:45) 6:45
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STAR WARS:
THE RISE OF
SKYWALKER PG-13

FRI-SUN: (12:30) (3:30) 6:30
MON-THURS: 6:30

JUMANJI: THE
NEXT LEVEL PG-13

FRI-SUN: (1:00) (4:00) 7:00
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