

Deputy

Continued from A1

Before he reached the highway a truck pulled up.

The driver asked McKibben if he needed help.

The driver was Dennis Lefever, a corporal with the Baker County Sheriff's Office. He was off duty.

Lefever and his wife, Maja, were hunting elk too. Their camp was a mile or so from McKibben's, on the opposite side of a ridge.

"Had Dennis not come along I would have been in a very uncomfortable place," McKibben said.

Lefever, 49, was driving back to camp after a morning hunt when he saw McKibben.

Lefever said he didn't spare a moment's thought about whether he should stop when he saw McKibben.

"It's easy for people to get turned around in the woods, and I wasn't sure if he was lost or stuck," Lefever said. "When you see a guy walking on the road you stop to make sure they're all right."

McKibben wasn't lost.

But he had a problem just the same. He didn't have cell service so he couldn't call his brother, John, who lives in Pendleton.

Lefever, who has hunted in the area for many years, told McKibben to jump in.

They drove back to McKibben's camp.

But two people working on the truck was no more effective at reviving the rig than McKibben had been alone.

Lefever drove McKibben the 15 miles or so to Sumpter to buy an additive that can remove small amounts of water from fuel.

While they were in Sumpter, McKibben asked Lefever if there was an ATM in town.

"He wanted to give me some money," Lefever said. "I told him I'm not worried about that."

Lefever, whose phone did have service, offered to let McKibben call his brother, who is a helicopter mechanic, and get some advice.

His brother suggested replacing some parts that weren't available in Sumpter.

So Lefever offered to drive McKibben to Baker City, about 45 miles from the camp on Corral Springs Road, to buy the parts.

In Baker City they went through the same routine as before.

McKibben asked about an ATM.

Lefever shrugged off any mention of money.

The pair retraced their route to



Baker County Sheriff's Office/Contributed Photo
Dennis Lefever is a corporal with the Baker County Sheriff's Office.

"To say I have a fondness for him in my heart would be an understatement. I don't think I can convey how much he helped me."

— Steve McKibben, talking about Cpl. Dennis Lefever of the Baker County Sheriff's Office

McKibben's camp and had another go at the recalcitrant Ford, replacing the glow plug relay.

McKibben, in a letter he sent last month to Baker County Sheriff Travis Ash, lauding Lefever's generosity, describes the effect of the new part.

"Crank and crank and crank for nothing — she just won't start."

About that time, Lefever got a text message from his wife, Maja Lefever was heading back to their camp but couldn't make it up the hill in the new snow.

Lefever told McKibben he had to go help his wife.

McKibben said he would sleep that night in his truck and wait for his brother, who planned to drive from Pendleton the following day.

In his letter, McKibben writes that it was dark when Lefever drove away, "reluctantly leaving me in the truck alone."

The camp cook makes a decision

Lefever headed back to his own camp. Once he and Maja had both their vehicles there, he started putting together dinner.

"I'm usually the camp cook," he said. It was the sort of simple, hearty meal typical of hunting camps.

As Lefever watched the steaks and the potatoes sizzle, creating a small halo of

aromatic warmth in the cold woods on the cusp of winter, Lefever got to thinking about McKibben.

"I wasn't sure what he had for food," Lefever said.

What Lefever did know is that he had one more steak than he and his wife needed.

And that McKibben's camp wasn't far. "We dished him up a plate," Lefever said.

And then he and his wife headed over the hill, hurrying a bit to make sure the food stayed hot.

A surprise shines through the dark

On the other side of the hill, McKibben did have food.

He did not have a juicy steak. Or fried potatoes.

But he wasn't thinking about the food he had or didn't have.

Mostly he was frustrated.

"I was pretty despondent by the end of the day," McKibben said.

He was annoyed that his truck, so trustworthy over nearly 200,000 miles, had betrayed him.

(Albeit the blame rested not with the Ford but with the fuel.)

McKibben described his feelings in his letter to Sheriff Ash.

"So here I am sitting in my truck in the dark on top of a snow covered mountain waiting for the frustration and fatigue of the day to leave me so I can just rest."

Then he glimpsed something bright amid the comprehensive darkness of the woods.

"All of the sudden I see the headlights," McKibben said.

He didn't at first recognize the rig that pulled into his camp, or the two people who got out.

Then Lefever was placing the warm plate in his hands, and introducing Maja, whom McKibben had not met.

"It was a big steak," McKibben said.

"And all of the sudden my spirits were lifted. I realized I've got people who are going way above and beyond to help.

That really pulled me out of that funk. It was amazing"

Actually it was even more than that. The Lefevers didn't linger.

Turns out they hadn't eaten the dinner Dennis had cooked.

They chose to make their delivery first.

"That kind of generosity very few people I've run across have that. I mean I've met lots of nice people, but this was an exceptionally generous gesture. It was the right meal at the right time.

"And the right smile."

The Ford finally starts

The next morning, Nov. 11, 2021,

Lefever drove to meet McKibben's brother, John, and show him the way to Steve's camp.

John McKibben had brought another battery and a generator so Steve could plug in the pickup's block heater.

Lefever stayed to help the brothers work on the Ford.

Finally the diesel rumbled to life. "My relief was a palpable gasp," Steve McKibben wrote in his letter to Sheriff Ash.

He also wrote, referring to Lefever: "Now to the man who had selflessly given 1 1/2 days of his elk hunt and more kindness, generosity and helpfulness than any man can expect. An exceptional man of enduring qualities I believe we should all do well to emulate. My respect will be heartfelt and I am truly blessed to have gotten to know him."

Lefever said he didn't think any more about whether to return to McKibben's camp, to make sure he had a hot meal and that he was OK, than he did about whether to stop when he first saw the stranger striding up the lonely gravel road.

"In a situation like that you definitely want to make sure they either get up and going or get the help they need," Lefever said. "You want to see it through."

But he wasn't satisfied even after he knew that McKibben's truck was running, and that his brother was there to help if needed.

Lefever said he called McKibben a few days after their meeting in the woods, just to make sure he made it home safely. And because he wanted to talk to this man he barely knew.

"He said he felt he had made a new friend," Lefever said. "I feel the same way."

Lefever said he was surprised, though, when Ash showed him McKibben's letter.

"It makes a person feel good," Lefever said.

He downplays his own actions, saying he had only done what he would hope someone else would do if their situations were reversed.

Lefever said McKibben tried yet again to give him money, after his truck was running again.

Lefever said he told McKibben, and his brother, "just pass it forward guys, that's pretty much all I ask."

Both Lefever and McKibben said they plan to stay in touch.

McKibben said he will never forget Lefever's kindness.

"To say I have a fondness for him in my heart would be an understatement, McKibben said. "I don't think I can convey how much he helped me."

Shop

Continued from A1

He's been busy recently cleaning cars, inside

and out, that have been fouled by the variety of muck common during the freeze and thaw cycles of winter.

"This month has been very busy, every day," Luna said recently, with four or five customers daily.

He anticipates more brisk business during the next big melt.

Luna, 37, previously worked at Baker City Auto Ranch and at Paradise Truck & RV Wash in Baker City for eight years.

He has also cleaned carpets in homes and businesses, so he's acquainted with one of the main aspects of interior car detailing.

Luna, who has lived in Baker City for 11 years and said he likes the town very much, bought the building at 2119 10th St., just north of Broadway.

John Matthiesen, his friend and former employer at Paradise Truck Wash, helps Luna at RM Detail and Car Wash.

A full detail job includes cleaning the engine compartment, interior panels (door panels, cup holders, dash, door jams, and more), shampooing carpets and seats, cleaning and dressing leather upholstery, and applying a brightening material to wheels.

Luna also offers washing and waxing, and headlight restoration.

With the pandemic continuing, Luna offers masks and hand sanitizer in his shop.

More information about RM Detail and Car Wash is available by calling 541-239-8835.

Police

Continued from A2

While the discussions are still in their infancy, Palmer said he expects to have a number of meetings with Haberly, McKinley and possibly a few other people in an attempt to come up with a proposal for law enforcement funding that both city and county leaders could accept.

However, he said, the plan isn't likely to involve the sort of fund exchange Green proposed.

"The policing and roads that Nick asked for are two different things, and we're go-

ing to keep them two different things," Palmer said.

Asked why he and Haberly took it upon themselves to initiate talks on the law enforcement funding issue, Palmer said they felt a responsibility to the community.

"Gregg and I grew up together," he said. "We want to see our town do better."

McKinley said he's just looking for a solution that will enable him and his deputies to do their job the way it should be done.

"I'm hoping to get the staff to be able to adequately cover the city and make the city feel they are adequately covered," McKinley said.

County

Continued from A1

covering or face shield when in an indoor space. All individuals in attendance at meetings under the control of Baker County are expected to comply with this rule, unless actively eating, drinking, speaking or presenting in the meeting. Baker County will make reasonable accommodation in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, Title VII of the Civil

Rights Act, ORS 659.850 and other applicable provisions of Oregon law.

OAR 333-019-1025(4)-(7). Face coverings continue to be required in County

buildings."

The notice also includes a link to the live stream of the meeting, www.baker-county.org/online/meetings.html.

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Ontario 8:00 AM at the Plaza Inn Restaurant in Ontario	John Day 11:00 AM at Ogilvie Field in John Day	Baker City 6:00 PM at the Baker County Conference & Event Center
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27 December 2021

Dear Fellow Veteran:

I am running for the overwhelming honor of serving as your next Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Oregon Guard.

Oregon desperately needs effective, solution-oriented leadership. As your next Governor, I will restore Constitutional order on Day 1 because the first duty of Government is maintaining order and safeguarding the innocent. As the next Commander-in-Chief of Oregon's Guard, I will never treat you like a prop.

I was trained that leading means you sleep last, eat last, and put yourself last.

I lead with a servant's heart because serving America is in my blood. I went to Marine Corps boot camp in 1979. My time in the Corps taught me how to fight – and win – as a team. After I graduated from medical school, I was proud to serve as a Navy physician. My dad was an Army soldier and Japanese POW in World War II. He met my German mother while serving in the Army Air Corps during the Berlin Airlift. I grew up right outside March Air Force Base, and my first job was bagging groceries at the Commissary.

I learned from the start that a team couldn't win unless every member of the team plays team ball.

Many of you know that I fought my heart out in 2016 to save Oregon from Kate Brown. We were outnumbered and overrun. We lost that battle, but we will not lose this war for the future of Oregon—a war for what you sacrificed to defend.

Today, Oregon is at a crossroads. You can barely recognize the great State we call home. She is bleeding out, and she won't survive unless you administer buddy aid.

Oregonians will follow where you lead. To win, I need your endorsement. I need you to sign up with my campaign to keep you informed of events, rallies, and targets of opportunity. I need you to contribute. But most of all, I need you to lead by organizing every Veteran in this great State to help me take it back.

The decisive battle is about to be joined, and I am asking you to join thousands of fellow patriots in Veterans for Bud Pierce. By rallying to my guidon, you can save Oregon.

Semper fi,

Dr. Bud Pierce
Sgt, USMCR/LTCDR, USNR