

Accused

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Mercado wrote that he talked with Robert Goodwin, who reported the incident. Mercado also saw Kallio's 2003 Nissan Maxima in the irrigation ditch that runs beside Settler's Loop.

Goodwin told Mercado that he was riding in Kallio's car as they returned to their camp. Goodwin said Kallio put on his seatbelt, revved the car's engine and said his, Kallio's, life was over. Goodwin said he got out of the car.

"Brian then spun the car around and intentionally tried to run Robert and his tent over with his vehicle, which resulted in Brian driving the vehicle into the creek," Mercado wrote in his affidavit.

After talking with Goodwin, Mercado drove to the north end of Settler's Loop, at Pochontas, where Oregon State Police Sr. Trooper Tim Schuette had arrested Kallio around 7:28 p.m.

Schuette told Mercado that Kallio was "hitting himself and threw himself on the ground when he had arrived."

Mercado wrote that he called for mental health experts to meet with Kallio.

Mercado then went back to the camp to continue his interview with Goodwin.

Goodwin said he had been staying with Kallio at the camp and that they had been getting along until the past few days when "Brian appeared to become paranoid."

Goodwin said that Kallio's car missed him by about 2 feet.

Around 8 p.m., Mercado met Baker City Police Officer Mark Powell, who had interviewed Kallio. Mercado and Powell interviewed Kallio at the police department.

Kallio told the officers he had met Goodwin about a week earlier, and that they had been living in Kallio's car. Kallio told the officers that he wanted to kill Robert "because of a past relationship that he had been building over the past year, because Robert had been hinting that the relationship was not real."

Mercado wrote that Kallio admitted using methamphetamine and marijuana. He told the officers he had used both drugs around 5:30 p.m. on Saturday, or about 90 minutes before the incident.

Kallio told the officers that after Goodwin got out of the car, he "pushed the gas pedal all the way to the floor," spun around twice and tried to run Goodwin over before crashing into the ditch.

Kallio said he threw a machete at (Goodwin) in "another attempt to kill him but missed."

Kallio said he then walked away, heading north.

Mercado arrested Kallio at 9:07 p.m. and took him to the emergency room at Saint Alphonsus Medical Center for a medical evaluation. Mercado said he also did a field sobriety test on Kallio in the hospital lobby.

At 10:14 p.m. Mercado drove Kallio to the Baker County Jail, where he remains.



Jayson Jacoby/Baker City Herald

A series of snowstorms over the past two weeks has boosted the snowpack to record or near-record levels for early November in parts of Northeastern Oregon.

Snow

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And others are close to the maximum for that date.

This wintry onslaught has perhaps seemed especially sudden because it followed an October that was, until the final week or so, more reminiscent of summer than of fall.

Unlike some years, there were no late summer or early autumn storms that brought a brief preview of winter, with a light dusting of snow that disappeared a few hours after the next dawn.

Since the first significant storm, which arrived Oct. 21, a series of progressively chillier systems has continued to accumulate snow not only in the mountains but, at times, in the valleys.

The result is a snowpack that's far ahead of typical for the second week of November.

And snowpack has an importance far beyond its scenic and recreation benefits. Mountain snow is the biggest reservoir for this arid region — the key source of water to irrigate crops and to produce forage for beef cattle, both crucial contributors to the local economy.

Soaking the soil

Bennett said one of his chief worries this fall was that snow would come only after the ground, desiccated by a dry summer and early fall, had frozen.

When that happens, he said, even a deep winter snowpack can be wasted, in a sense, because much of the melting snow soaks into the soil rather than running into streams, replenishing reservoirs that supply irrigation water.

But the recent storms have considerably eased Bennett's anxiety on that account.

Rain dampened the soil in late October, he said, and although snow earlier in November melted, the ground had not yet frozen, allowing even more moisture to soak in.

Wednesday's snowstorm didn't quite make it to Baker Valley, with flakes mainly confined to the southern and eastern parts of Baker County.

Bennett said there was about 1 inch of snow

in Unity, but as he drove east on Highway 245 toward Bridgeport the snow deepened and was still falling Wednesday morning.

Mountain snowpack piles up

As usual, even more snow is accumulating at higher elevations.

Automated snow-measuring stations, known as Snotels, reflect the unusual generosity of the early storms.

At Taylor Green, for instance, in the western Wallows east of Medical Springs, the water content in the snow (the most meaningful statistic when it comes to forecasting water supplies) on Nov. 8 was 3.6 inches.

That's the most ever for that date since the Snotel was installed there in 1979, according to records from the Natural Resources Conservation Service, a federal agency that oversees snowpack measuring across the West.

At Eilertson Meadow, along Rock Creek in the Elkhorn Mountains west of Haines, the water content Nov. 8 was 1.2 inches. That's a modest amount — the elevation at the site is just 5,500 feet — but it's the second-highest for Nov. 8 since the Snotel was installed there in 1980. The record for the date is 1.7 inches, in 2005.

At Moss Springs, in the western Wallows above Cove, the water content Nov. 8 was 4.9 inches, the most on that date since the Snotel was built in 1980.

A similar situation prevails across the region.

- Aneroid Lake, in the Wallows south of Wallowa Lake. Water content Nov. 8 was 3.4 inches, the fifth-most since the Snotel went in in 1981.

- Mount Howard, also in the Wallows near Wallowa Lake. Water content Nov. 8 was 3.3 inches, the fifth-most since the Snotel was installed in 1980.

- Schneider Meadows, in the southern Wallows north of Halfway. Water content Nov. 8 was 3.3 inches, the third-highest total since the Snotel was installed in 1981.

- Milk Shakes, in the northern Blues north of Tollgate. Water content Nov. 8 was 5.2 inches, the most for that date since the Snotel was installed in 2007.

Alderson

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Alderson and his brother, Mark, own Baboon Creek Outfitters, a sporting goods store on Main Street in Baker City.

In response to a voters guide questionnaire in October, Alderson said his top priority as chairman is to work toward creating a fire district to improve fire protection in the county. He also cited the need for affordable housing as a major focus.

Christina Witham, who was running unopposed for position 2, one of the two part-time commissioner slots, was also elected Tuesday.

Alderson, 42, will replace Bill Harvey, whose second four-year term expires at the end of 2022. Harvey did not seek reelection.

Witham will replace Mark Bennett, who also did not run for another term.

Alderson and Witham will join current commissioner Bruce Nichols, who was elected in 2020 to a four-year term.

Baker Rural Fire Protection District tax levy

For the second time this year, voters rejected a five-year property tax levy for the district that includes parts of Baker Valley.

The measure failed with 544 votes against and 464 votes in favor.

The levy would have increased property taxes by 75 cents for \$1,000 of assessed value.

In the May primary, voters rejected, by 362 votes to 329, a five-year levy that would have boosted taxes by \$1 per \$1,000 of assessed value.

District officials said the tax levy was needed to keep up with increasing costs for equipment as well as the increase in the number of homes in the district over the past few decades.

The district, which was formed in 1983, has relied almost solely on a permanent property tax levy of 67 cents for \$1,000 of assessed value. That levy has never been increased.

Psilocybin ban measures

There were several measures on the ballot asking voters to ban psilocybin (magic mushrooms) businesses in unincorporated

Council

Continued from A1

The county could potentially also receive a small number of eligible ballots that were left in a dropbox in a different county.

County Clerk Stefanie Kirby said on Wednesday morning, Nov. 9 that she hopes to certify final results Nov. 30.

Baker City Council incumbents Dean Guyer, with 2,068 votes, and Johnny Waggoner Sr. with 1,893 votes, were second and third. If that order remains, both would serve four-year terms along with Diaz.

Former councilor Beverly Calder had 1,830 votes and was in fourth, which would mean she would serve a two-year term. Calder had a lead of 51 votes over Katie LaFavor, who was fifth with 1,779 votes.

Other candidates: Joe Johnson, 1,734; Kenyon Damschen (incumbent), 1,328; Donald Frank Cody, 1,160.

The election isn't the only thing affecting the roster of councilors, though.

Two of the three current councilors — Kerry McQuisten and Shane Alderson — will be leaving office.

McQuisten is moving outside the city limits and will no longer be eligible to serve as a councilor. Her last meeting will be Nov. 22.

Alderson was elected Tuesday as chairman of the Baker County Board of Commissioners, so he will also have to resign as a councilor in December before being sworn in as commission chairman in January 2023. The other councilors, per the city charter,

parts of Baker County and within some cities.

Voters approved all of the measures.

- Baker County unincorporated areas: Yes, 5,478; no, 2,762
- Sumpter: Yes, 100; no, 40
- Huntington: Yes, 122; no, 71
- Halfway: Yes, 115, no, 61
- Unity: Yes, 20; no, 1

Contested races in other cities

Sumpter mayor

- Linda Wise, 98 votes
- Jon Patterson, 41 votes

Sumpter City Council, position 2

- Charlie Briscoe, 88 votes
- Vern Hollopetter, 38 votes

Huntington mayor

- Natalie VanCleave, 120 votes
- Donald Stacy, 46 votes

Haines mayor

- Dennis Anthony, 146 votes
- Brian Pound, 30 votes

Halfway mayor

- Nora Aspy, 110 votes
- Rose Darting, 61 votes

U.S. House of Representatives

Republican Cliff Bentz easily won another two-year term in Congress, defeating Democrat Joe Yetter in the Second Congressional District, which includes Baker County.

In unofficial results, Bentz had 179,069 votes to Yetter's 88,577.

Baker County voters also went heavily for Bentz. He received 6,640 votes in the county, compared with Yetter's 1,728.

Oregon House of Representatives

Incumbent Mark Owens, a Republican from Crane, easily won reelection in House District 60 over Antonio Sunseri of the Progressive party.

Owens had 23,566 votes to Sunseri's 2,710.

In Baker County, Owens had 6,868 votes, Sunseri 828.

Uncontested county races

Two elected county officials, clerk Stefanie Kirby and treasurer Alice Durlfänger, were unopposed. Both were reelected to four-year terms.

will appoint two people to replace McQuisten and Alderson.

Incumbent councilor Jason Spriet was elected in 2020 to a four-year term.

Baker City measures

Baker City voters decided on several measures on the Nov. 8 ballot, including a measure banning psilocybin mushroom-related businesses within the city limits.

Voters approved that ban by a margin of 2,943 votes to 1,602.

- Measure 1-110: Should Baker City change acting mayor's title to vice mayor?

The measure failed, with 3,143 no votes and 1,115 yes votes.

- Measure 1-111: Should the city require councilors to review their oath of office, the city charter and the U.S. and Oregon Constitutions annually?

The measure passed, with 3,485 yes votes and 956 no votes.

- Measure 1-112: Should the city remove from its charter a section, added more than 30 years ago, that prohibits the incineration of transformers in the city?

The measure passed, with 2,616 yes votes and 1,459 no votes.

- Measure 1-113: Should the city charter be changed to replace the pronoun "his" to "their" in one section?

The measure failed, with 2,557 no votes and 1,857 yes votes.

- Measure 1-114: Should the city charter be changed to clarify that the Baker County Justice Court handles municipal court duties for the city?

The measure passed, with 2,785 yes votes and 1,308 no votes.

Award

Continued from A1

That last arrangement didn't last, with Myron quipping, "Everyone should have to milk cows once in their life — it's all up from there."

Finally, in 1980, the couple returned to North Powder for good after buying a 1,400-acre property.

Today, Miles Ranch runs 250 head of mother cows.

The couple will be recognized by Oregon Aglink as the 2022 Agriculturists of the Year during the organization's annual Denim and Diamonds dinner and auction fundraiser on Friday, Nov. 18.

Myron also has a breeding program, using artificial insemination. He works with American Breeders Service Global, a company that sells semen from

bulls, carefully choosing genetic traits that will allow his cows to grow bigger, faster and produce higher-quality meat.

Cows at Miles Ranch are rotated regularly in pastures to avoid overgrazing and spreading invasive weeds. A smaller portion of the land is dedicated to growing alfalfa, with minimal tillage and cover crops to prevent soil erosion.

"You need to protect the environment and our resources, so our kids and grandkids will still have food," he said.

Away from the ranch, Myron is a board member for the Baker Valley Soil and Water Conservation District and has spent 60 years advocating for ranchers with the Oregon Cattlemen's Association. He was president of the Baker County Livestock Association when the county adopted its right-to-farm ordi-

nance, protecting growers from nuisance complaints.

Meanwhile, Dotty remains active as a board member for Blue Mountain Community College and the local Baker City Rotary Club.

"We wouldn't know how to act if we didn't have a calendar that was completely clogged up with things to do," Myron said.

The couple said they are pleased and honored to be recognized as Agriculturists of the Year by Oregon Aglink.

"Not only do we pride ourselves on how we run our ranch," Myron said, "but we think that we've helped others along the way to improve their cattle and way of life, too."

Oregon Aglink is a nonprofit volunteer organization dedicated to agricultural education and outreach. Denim and Diamonds raises money for programs such

as Adopt a Farmer, pairing farms with middle school classrooms for field trips and activities.

Every year, Oregon Aglink selects a group, business or individual as its Agriculturist of the Year, recognizing outstanding contributions to the agriculture industry as a whole.



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