

Linda

Continued from A2

Sarah believes Linda was a victim of her own kindness, that she tried to help the people who ended up killing her.

"She always tried to help people out," Sarah said. "Because she had lived on the street, she tried to help the people she met out there."

Lucille Lane, another of Linda's younger sisters, agrees.

"She had always kind of taken in the outcasts and the troubled ones," said Lane, who lives in Pocatello, Idaho. "She had been in and out of that lifestyle."

Sarah still wonders whether she made a mistake, even though she was trying to help Linda, by encouraging her daughter to move into the apartment.

"I talked her into getting that apartment — I wished I hadn't," Sarah said. "She was safe on the street. Safer, anyway."

Lucille remembers the "sick feeling" she had in March 2019 when she learned, from Linda's daughter, Alesia, that Linda was missing.

"She was very schedule-oriented," Lucille said of Linda. "She had never just disappeared without telling anyone like that."

Loretta said she suffered from severe depression after Linda's disappearance.

Loretta lived for about four months with a friend in New Hampshire before returning to Baker City.

What happened?

Linda's mother, her sisters and her daughter-in-law, Stephanie Mailman, who lives in La Grande and is married to Linda's son, Anthony Mailman, all believe that Linda was murdered and that they know two people who were involved.

That pair, a man and a woman, seem to be inextricably linked to Linda's disappearance, Sarah said.

Many people have mentioned those two names when talking about the case, she said.

Stephanie, who helped Alesia, Linda's daughter, clean out Linda's apartment after she disappeared, said there was no evidence that a struggle had taken place in the apartment. No blood, no marks on the walls.

Stephanie, like Linda's other relatives, believes she was killed somewhere else.

"Whatever happened did not happen at that apartment," Stephanie said.

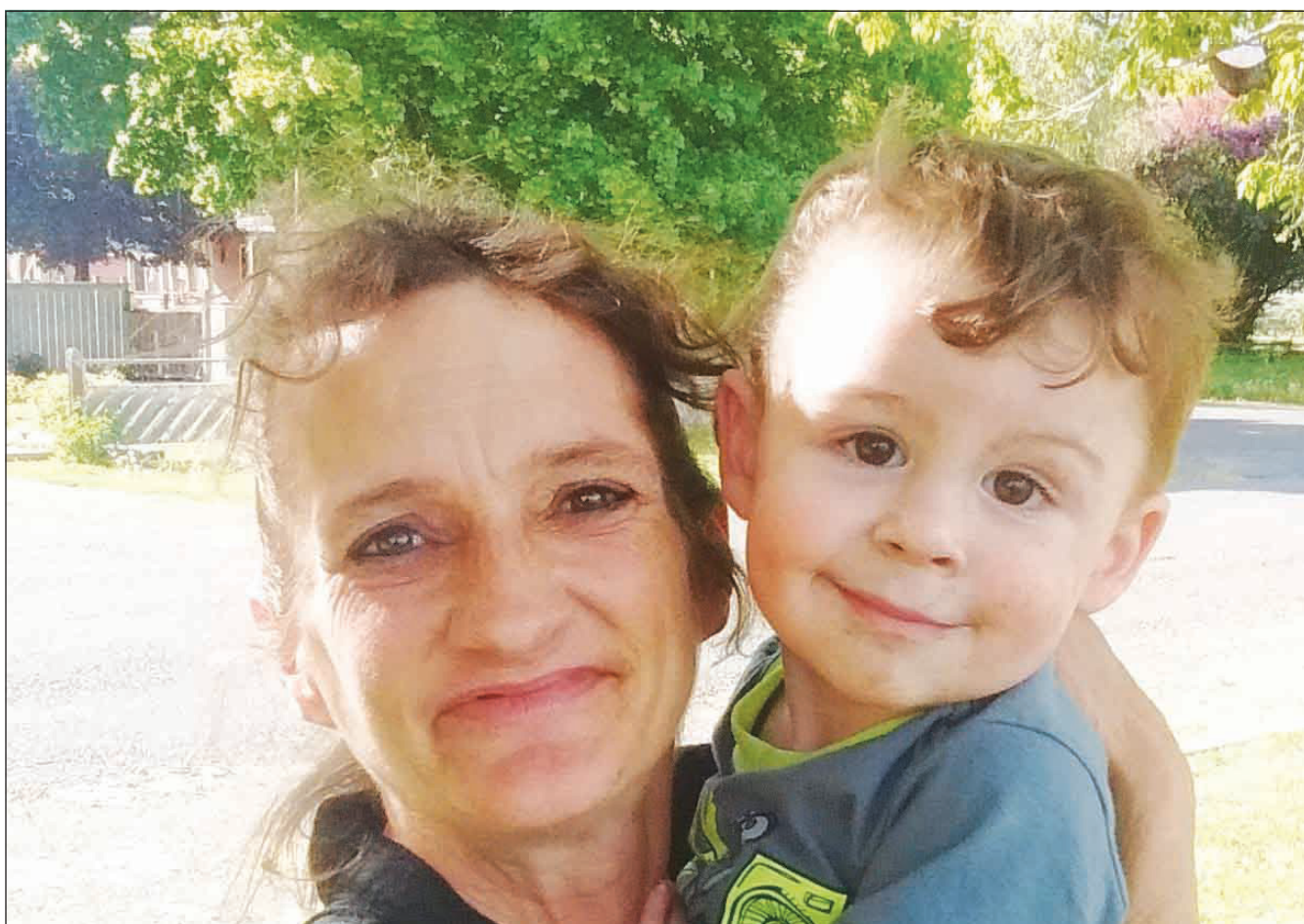
Although Linda's relatives know she had a history of drug addiction, and that she associated with people who both used and sold drugs, they believe that the motivation for her murder was more likely money.

Sarah said Linda had withdrawn \$400 from an account just before she went missing.

"The two people I think did it, I think they wanted that money," Sarah said.

Duby, the police chief, said officers removed a variety of items from Linda's apartment, including sections of carpet and furniture.

The items were tested but

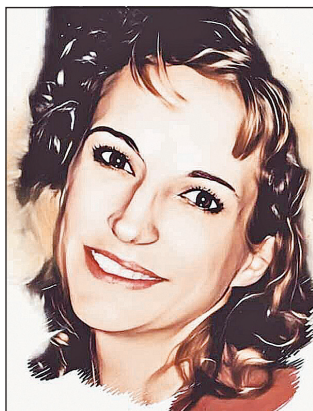


Linda Peterson with her grandson, Keiran, in La Grande in 2016.

Contributed Photos



Linda Peterson, second from right, in Baker City in 2013 with her daughter, Alesia, far right, her mother, Sarah Leffler, sitting, and Linda's son, Anthony Mailman, left.



This drawing of Linda Peterson is from a photograph that is a favorite of her mother, Sarah Leffler.

none yielded evidence that suggested any crime had been committed in the apartment.

But neither does that mean Linda wasn't harmed there, he said.

"It's an unknown," Duby said. He said Sgt. Wayne Chastain was recently assigned to oversee Linda's case. Detective Shannon Regan, who has been on paid leave since July 2021, was originally the lead investigator.

Sarah and other relatives said they appreciated Regan's efforts to keep them up to date on the

investigation while she was working the case.

They said they haven't had as much contact with police recently, however.

Duby said he understands that Linda's loved ones are frustrated by the lack of resolution — her body hasn't been found and no one has been charged. "I would be (frustrated) too," he said.

Duby said police have obtained warrants to search multiple buildings and properties and have employed dogs trained to find cadavers.

Police towed a van from one property that, according to rumors, might have been involved in Linda's disappearance, and that she had been in the van, possibly after she died.

"We tore that thing apart," Duby said. "There was not one iota of evidence."

None of the other searches has turned up evidence about Linda's whereabouts, either.

Duby shares the suspicion of Linda's family that Linda knew the people who killed her.

"This is not the bushy-haired stranger kind of situation,"

Duby said.

"The person or persons responsible were known to Linda, associated with her. We're pretty focused on a very limited number of people, and kind of always have been."

Duby said the police department's file on Linda's disappearance contains nearly 1,000 pages of documents.

One area of contention between Duby and Linda's relatives is the value of distributing new fliers about her disappearance.

Stephanie, who maintains a Facebook page where she frequently posts about Linda's case, contends that putting out fliers not only would "let people know that we haven't forgotten about her," but could potentially also prompt someone who was involved in her disappearance, or who has information, to contact police.

Stephanie believes the people involved could be influenced by remorse or guilt.

She said she wants to "put pressure" on people who have knowledge that could resolve the case.

"very, very few people out there who know what happened" — and possibly only those who were directly involved in Linda's death.

None of those people has confessed in going on four years, and Duby is skeptical that publicity will persuade anyone to do so.

Greg Baxter, Baker County district attorney, said he's optimistic that Chastain, the newly assigned detective, will bring a "fresh set of eyes" to the case.

Baxter said police have received multiple leads in Linda's disappearance in 2022, and they will continue to probe each one.

"It's an active case that we are pursuing," Baxter said. "We are working hard."

Linda's relatives said they understand police are still working on the case, but some criticize aspects of the investigation, both in its early stages and continuing today.

Stephanie, for instance, said she and Linda's daughter should not have been allowed to remove items from the Broadway Street apartment before police had searched.

Stephanie said her husband, Anthony, who is serving a sentence for drug and firearm possession charges in Powder River Correctional Facility in Baker City, told her recently he feels that Linda's disappearance "is not getting the attention it deserves." He attributes this to Linda's socioeconomic status, and contends that if she were wealthy, rather than a sometimes transient, police would have been more aggressive in the early stages of the investigation.

See **Linda** / A5

Wesley Ann Brown

1941 - November 4, 2022

Wesley Ann Brown, daughter of Rev. Thomas Jefferson and Laverne Franks, went to dwell in the House of the Lord forever on November 4th, 2022, after a courageous battle with cancer.



Wesley Ann was born in 1941 at Wesley Hospital in Wichita, Kansas, where her father was pastor at Wesley Methodist Church. Wes was a member of the Park Hill Methodist Youth Fellowship in Denver, Colorado, where she met the love of her life, Philip Jay Brown. After graduating from East Denver High School she attended and graduated from Colorado Women's College. Shortly thereafter, she became a teacher in the Denver Public Schools. She married Philip Jay Brown in 1964 at Rockland Community Church in Golden, Colorado. They honeymooned at Y.M.C.A. of the Rockies, Estes Park, Colorado. After a brief stint in Colorado, they moved to Cincinnati, Ohio, where she taught school for three years. They then moved back to Colorado Springs, Colorado where she taught for another three and a half years in the Pikes Peak School District.

Staying true to her three-year pattern of employment, she taught another three years in Kewanee, Illinois. After the adoption of their son, Matthew, in 1971, moved out west to the town they would ultimately call their "true home," Baker City, Oregon. Seven years later, their second son, Christopher, was adopted. In Baker City, Wes continued teaching until her retirement in 1998.

Besides the lifelong friendships created at North Baker Elementary and Churchill Elementary, another highlight of her educational tenure was, along with her 6th grade class, creating a submission, being selected, and ultimately representing Oregon in NASA's "Name the Shuttle" contest. She was invited as NASA's guest to witness the launch of the shuttle Endeavor at Cape Canaveral. She also coached the Baker High School tennis team for a few years in the 1990s.

After retiring, Wes stayed active by being involved in numerous United States Tennis Association teams and sanctioned tournaments, even qualifying for the National Champions in San Diego, California. They went on to take 2nd place overall. Wes continued pursuing her hobbies and passions, which included her dogs, birding (feeders were always full) and participating in Senior Short Course Triathlons. In the late 1990s, valuable time was spent taking care of her dogs on the farm and participating in the USTA's Senior Grass Court tournaments, some matches played on their homebuilt grass tennis court with lights. It seemed as though Baker City would become their "forever home" into retirement and beyond, but after the birth of their first granddaughter, Annika Grace Brown, they uprooted and moved to Nampa, Idaho, to be close to their expanding family. After moving to Nampa, Wes continued playing in USTA league tennis until "Father Time" hinted that it was time to put the racquet down. Her remaining years in Idaho were focused on being ever-present in her children's and grandchildren's life. Wes attended every concert, sporting event, and performance possible, until she became ill in 2021. She was her grandkids' biggest fan, advocate, and model of unconditional love!

Wesley Ann is survived by her husband of 58 years, Philip Brown, her two sons Matthew Garth and Christopher Gallen, daughter-in-law Stephanie Kinman (to whom she was as close as a daughter), and three grandchildren, Annika, Riley and Camden. Her family was her life! Her never-ending love and sense of humor will be missed, but never forgotten. Her laugh and smile were contagious!

Wesley Anne wishes any donations in her memory go to Stand Up To Cancer at standuptocancer.org or the United Methodist Church in Baker City, Oregon. Many THANKS to family, Honi Deaton, St. Luke's Hospice program, and Alsip and Persons Funeral Chapel.

A Celebration of Life Service will be held at 1 p.m. on Saturday, November 19th at Alsip and Persons Funeral Chapel in Nampa, Idaho: 404 10th Ave S., Nampa, ID 83651. Remembrances may be shared at www.alsippersons.com.

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