

DESCHUTES BUBBLES UP THE LIST

TOP 50 CRAFT BEER SELLERS ARE ANNOUNCED • BUSINESS, A11

CHAMPS: BAYLOR

NCAA MEN'S BASKETBALL TITLE • SPORTS PULLOUT, A5-8

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Wirkkala acquitted in 2nd murder trial

Imprisoned for 8 years, judge tells Wirkkala he's a free man: 'It feels a little surreal,' he says

BY GARRETT ANDREWS

The Bulletin

REDMOND — First, he was called an accused murderer. Then, a convicted murderer and state prison inmate working on a life sentence.

On Monday, Luke Anton Wirkkala learned

he'd earned a new title.

Free man.

"I'm just trying to take it all in," Wirkkala said minutes after emerging from the Deschutes County jail, a smile overtaking his face. "It feels a little surreal. Eight long years."

A half-hour earlier, a jury found Wirkkala, 40, not guilty in the death of David Andrew Ryder, a houseguest Wirkkala had shot at close range with a pump-action shotgun in 2013. Jurors also acquitted Wirkkala on lesser counts of first-degree manslaughter and second-degree manslaughter. They reached all verdicts by

votes of 10-2.

It was Wirkkala's second murder trial for Ryder's death — he was convicted in 2014, but the Oregon Court of Appeals ordered a retrial because the original jury heard portions of a police interview after Wirkkala had invoked his right to an attorney.

The retrial in a makeshift courtroom at the Deschutes County Fair & Expo Center was a dry and, at times, emotional four-week affair.

The defense argued Wirkkala acted in self-defense when he shot Ryder.

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Luke Wirkkala, seen March 19 during his retrial, had been accused of killing a houseguest in 2013. He was acquitted of all charges Monday.

Dean Guernsey/The Bulletin file

STREAM TEAM

Wyden lauds students who pushed for 'wild and scenic' status for Oregon rivers



BY MICHAEL KOHN

The Bulletin

On the banks of Tumalo Creek on Monday, Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., declared the success of a grassroots campaign to designate thousands of miles of rivers and creeks in Oregon as "wild and scenic," protecting them in perpetuity.

Surrounded by Bend-area students that nominated rivers in Central Oregon, Wyden told reporters that the process to have the River Democracy Act passed is on a "fast track."

If passed, the legislation will add nearly 4,700 miles of rivers and

streams in Oregon to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, a special designation that protects rivers in the same way that a national park protects a designated area of land.

Wyden and Oregon's junior senator, Jeff Merkley, also a Democrat, rallied Oregonians over a year ago to nominate their favorite rivers for inclusion in the act. More than 15,000 nominations poured in for what Wyden said was one of this country's largest grassroots campaigns.

"This is how political change starts in Oregon," said Wyden, flanked by two seventh graders from Pacific Crest Middle

Sen. Ron Wyden, center, speaks with students from Pacific Crest Middle School and Bend High School and other community members about the nomination of Tumalo Creek as a protected stream under the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

Dean Guernsey/The Bulletin

School and three seniors at Bend High School. "It's not top-down. It's grassroots up, and these incredible people are proving it."

The Pacific Crest students were among those who nominated Tumalo Creek for protection.

See Rivers / A13

WYDEN TOWN HALL

Senator talks vaccine passports, guns, tax credits in virtual meeting

BY BRENNIA VISSER

The Bulletin

Vaccines, gun control and economic issues were all addressed in a virtual town hall held by Sen. Ron Wyden on Monday for residents of Deschutes County.

In a public Zoom meeting, the issue of

whether the COVID-19 vaccine would become federally mandated surfaced multiple times. There were also questions about the probability of a "vaccine passport" — which would allow vaccinated individuals to participate in certain parts of society — coming to fruition.

For Christie Cronin, this has become an issue as she thinks about her own son, who had severe reactions to vaccines.

"I have big reservations about vaccines being mandated because they don't work all the same for all people," Cronin said.

See Town hall / A13

MARIJUANA REGULATION

Dispensaries, still illegal in Redmond, on city's agenda

Officials want to have rules ready in case U.S. legalizes pot

BY JACKSON HOGAN

The Bulletin

Recreational marijuana dispensaries are still illegal within Redmond city limits. But the City Council is already moving ahead to create regulations for where they can be located, in case that changes.

The Redmond City Council will discuss time, place and manner regulations for marijuana dispensaries at a special meeting at 6 p.m. Tuesday. Retail recreational marijuana sale is a topic that has been hotly debated among city councilors.

Mayor George Endicott said he asked city staff to draft dispensary regulations, despite marijuana outlets being illegal in Redmond, as he believes the federal government will legalize the drug nationwide soon.

See Marijuana / A4

Venues feel shut out of Oregon's opening plans

BY BRIAN MCELHINEY

For The Bulletin

Independent venues in Oregon are frustrated by a lack of guidance from state government about how or when they can reopen safely and feel they are not being treated fairly.

On Wednesday, members of the Independent Venue Coalition, a lobbying group consisting of venues and promoters from across the state, sat in on session with Leah Horner, jobs and economy adviser to Gov. Kate Brown, and state epidemiologist Dr. Dean Sidelinger. Coalition founder Jim

Brunberg, who co-owns Portland venues Mississippi Studios, Revolution Hall and Polaris Hall, said the format of the meeting was changed at the last minute, and the coalition was not able to present any information.

"It was originally scheduled as a meeting but was changed into a webinar at the last minute," he said. "None of the plans — we weren't allowed to present any of the plans we as an industry put considerable time into."

50%

Occupancy limit for venues at Oregon's lower-risk category, whereas churches, retail stores and grocery stores can open at 75% capacity.

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