

Veteran

Continued from A1

Webster wanted to find a solution. His hint came in the comments below Osborne’s Facebook post, which veterans had filled with their names and phone numbers, in case another veteran needed someone to talk to. Webster, however, knew someone in the throes of crisis would need a quicker, easier way to seek help and likely wouldn’t think to log on to social media.

That’s how Webster got the idea of an app he is building for veterans needing help while contemplating suicide. The free app, called LifeLine Find, allows veterans to type in their ZIP code and search for other veterans in their area who can counsel them in a time of need, providing a path past the red tape that often impedes the process of getting help.

“The whole idea is to get the story out there that this is something that could have been prevented,” he said. “It’s a story that is all too common.”

The app, Webster said, will be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, which Webster stresses is essential because too often mental health crises spurred by trauma occur outside the normal working hours that mental health facilities are open.

He said veterans will even be able to use a filter to find people of certain branches of the armed forces. He plans to launch the app next month, he said.

Webster is quick to describe the statistics behind what he sees as a



Clay Webster, a U.S. Marine Corps veteran, removes a rotor blade tie down from a Robinson R-44 helicopter Thursday at Bend Municipal Airport.

Dean Guernsey/
Bulletin photos



Veteran Clay Webster is using programs at Central Oregon Community College to design an app specifically for veterans with PTSD, contemplating suicide.

stigmatized problem that can lead to tragedy among service members. Department of Defense data show suicide rates among active-duty service members increased by more than 40% from 2015 to 2020, as reported by the New York Times.

In all, 30,177 active-duty military personnel and veterans who have served since the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorism attacks have died by suicide, according to a Brown University study. That’s more than four times as high as service members killed in combat during that time period, the study found.

Webster said he believes mental health issues among service members often go uncared for “more than any place.”

“The stigma around it is that it’s a sign of weakness, which it’s not,” he said. “But that’s the way that a lot of people view it. It’s hard for them to seek help because they don’t want to be viewed as someone who needs it.”

Osborne’s death inspired Webster to build this app to help other struggling veterans. He said he received approval from Osborne’s fiancée to feature the Marine’s story in its advertisements.

When he created a GoFundMe to raise money to build the app, Webster said Osborne’s fiancée was the first person to donate. So far, he has raised about \$700, and the rest of the funds for the app Webster is paying out of pocket.

Webster served as a Marine in

Japan, Thailand and in South Korea during then-President Donald Trump’s summit with Kim Jong Un in 2018. Born and raised in a small town in Southern Illinois, he attends COCC’s aviation program with the hopes of being a helicopter pilot.

Webster clarified that, at this point, although the app is intended for veterans, anyone who either needs help or wants to help others can use it.

To make it more accessible than current mental health help available for veterans, there will not be a screening process or background check to ensure the user is a veteran. Webster said he’s confident that veterans will know quickly whether they’re talking to another veteran or not.

Babysitter

Continued from A1

The injury was the kind of “high-energy” acceleration-deceleration injury that doctors told police detectives could never occur in a short fall. More likely, they said, it was abusive head trauma.

Three months later, after medical and digital forensics results were returned, Linschied was charged with first-degree assault and criminal mistreatment, crimes that carry up to eight years in prison. Linschied has strenuously maintained her innocence.

Last week, her jury trial began in the courtroom of Deschutes County Circuit Judge Bethany Flint. Prosecutors intend to prove that beneath her wholesome exterior, Linschied harbored a sadistic urge to harm children. In addition to graphic medical testimony, jurors have heard evidence in the form of Linschied’s internet search history, which contains queries like, “how long does a 1-year-old go without air before it dies?” and “wanting to hit babies for no reason.”

Trishelle Linschied

In photos on her blog, the Hotmess Hobo, Linschied has soft features and a gentle smile. She’s worn to court floral shawls with big jewelry, joined each day by a band of up to a dozen supportive family members and friends.

Linschied trained to be a Montessori educator through Bethany Global University. Her background includes volunteer work at an orphanage and a mission trip to Turkey.

Linschied has no prior criminal convictions and prosecutors concede she’s never been accused of anything like this before.

That Linschied hasn’t been allowed around children while awaiting trial for nearly four years has been a considerable hardship to her, Linschied’s attorney wrote in court documents seeking supervised contact with minors.

The references of several character witnesses who speak to Linschied’s kindness and affection for children were included in the court motion.

“I would not be writing

you this letter if I did not believe with every bone in my body that Trish is a trusted and warm person and I have no concerns regarding her spending time with children,” wrote Cindy Kubista, an Army veteran who met Linschied working at Costco in 2014.

Before she stopped updating her blog in late 2020, Linschied wrote how she’s filled her days since the case began: her, her dog, Hank, and her 2008 Honda CR-V — a “weekend nomad, adventure junkie, and peak bagger.”

“In October 2018, my life changed forever,” she wrote on her blog. “I wish I could give you more details as to what transpired on that date. If it were up to me I would gladly tell you the whole story. Until that’s possible, I’ll tell you what I can. An accident occurred. Not only was the accident itself traumatic, but the events that followed began to unravel into the worst nightmare of my life.”

Jackson Sykes is the first child of her parents, Brittany Duncan and Braden Sykes.

On Wednesday, day two of the trial, Jackson’s parents were called as witnesses.

In her first year of life, the girl was happy and almost unusually healthy, they testified. Outside of regular checkups, they took her to a doctor only once, for what turned out to be a bad cough.

Duncan worked at PetsMart and Skyes is an aircraft mechanic. The 20-something couple was living in Redmond and commuting to Bend at the time.

In late 2018, Duncan needed the income from a second job. Her mother in La Pine had watched Jackson, but a more reliable solution was needed.

The couple found Linschied through Craigslist. They met her at a coffee shop in Bend and thought she was “sweet,” Sykes said. She watched several other kids during the day. They followed her to her apartment and saw nothing concerning.

“She seemed normal. We decided to let her watch Jackson while we work,” Skyes said. “In Bend, it’s hard to find people to watch your kid.”

The parents testified Jackson was often happy when

they picked her up. And she was sometimes cranky about being dropped off, which they chalked up to her being that way.

The day

On Halloween 2018, they both received calls from paramedics telling them something had happened to Jackson and she was being taken by ambulance to St. Charles Bend.

Duncan got to the apartment in time and rode in the ambulance with her daughter. Sykes missed them by a few seconds.

“It was probably the most scary thing that I’ve experienced,” Duncan said.

In the emergency department of St. Charles, Dr. Kevin Jones was concerned when paramedics told him his latest patient had a head injury and showed signs of an altered mental status.

“That’s a huge red flag for us, because that can signify significant injury,” Jones said.

Also concerning was that she’d vomited and seemed unable to move her head to the right.

Jones ordered a CT scan to look at the child’s brain. With small children, physicians take the prospect of a CT scan extremely seriously, Jones said, because the chemicals given to irradiate the blood for the scan can increase a child’s cancer risk for life.

But Jackson’s altered mental status left doctors no choice, Jones testified.

“She immediately warranted imaging. There was really no question about it,” Jones said.

She was transferred by helicopter to a pediatric neurosurgeon at Legacy Emanuel in Portland.

Prosecutors have called several medical expert witnesses who examined Jackson directly, including Dr. Catherine Wagoner, who was resolute: The girl’s head injury was the result of abusive head trauma and not a fall.

“She didn’t do this to herself,” she said, indicating a color illustration of Jackson’s CT scans. “I have never seen it in a short fall.”

Bend Police officer Russell Skelton testified he remembered the day in 2018 well.

It was Halloween and he’d planned to take his kids trick or treating after his shift. But late in the afternoon, a supervisor told him something had come up and to put his plans on hold.

Skelton interviewed Linschied in her apartment and later at the station.

While testifying, Skelton was questioned about his friendly demeanor with Linschied.

“It’s just building rapport,” he said. “I’ve found if you don’t have that, an investigation can become a little more difficult.”

Skelton asked her if she’d turn over her phone and other devices to police. She agreed.

“We’re not looking in your cellphone to look through your life. We’re looking as of just today, this afternoon. Currently.”

Internet searches

The third day of the trial, Thursday, began with jurors hearing potentially damning evidence: Linschied’s internet search history from the weeks before Jackson’s injury.

“What makes me want to hit people?” she allegedly googled Sept. 27, 2018.

Later that day, she allegedly searched, “wanting to hit random babies for no reason,” followed by the similar, “adults wanting to hit random babies for no reason.”

On Oct. 10, 2018, she allegedly searched, “What happens to a 1-year-old when they keep getting their oxygen cut off?” Later that day, she allegedly searched, “How long does a 1-year-old go without being able to breath before it dies.”

“Why do i want to hurt defenseless people?” she searched on the morning Oct. 16, 2018.

“Psychology behind abusing babies,” she allegedly searched that day, followed by, “Do 1-year-olds remember being abused?”

Linschied’s attorney, Todd Grover, fought trial to exclude Linschied’s internet searches as evidence. And in his questioning of witnesses, he’s downplayed them, noting police combed through 3,000 unique searches on Linschied’s phone.

“We’re talking about a very small, select few searches that were of interest to your inves-

tigation, is that correct?” Grover asked Bend Police digital forensic analyst James Poole, who conducted the search of Linschied’s phone. “The vast majority of these searches are what you’d term benign or non-interesting. Is that correct?”

Poole agreed.

Grover asked Poole if any evidence was found Linschied visited “sodomasochistic” sites or the dark web.

Poole said there was not.

Grover asked Poole to confirm that after searching, Linschied often clicked on mental health websites or serious news outlets like the BBC.

Grover inquired about the other topics Linschied searched. Poole said they include cooking recipes, travel to Slovenia, exercise, shows on Netflix and watercolor painting.

Trial was off Friday and will resume Tuesday with more witnesses for the state.

The case is scheduled to conclude next week.

Grover has said Linschied intends to testify in her defense.

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