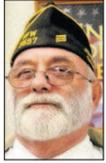


# VFW essay winners give voice to democracy

First-place winner competes at district level

By Angel Carpenter  
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY – The Grant County Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 3597 sponsored the Voice of Democracy essay and audio contest for local students.



Gregg Starr

This year's theme was "My Vision for America." County VFW Commander and Chief Gregg Starr announced the winners, all Grant Union seniors, last week: Taylor McCluskey, first place, \$200; Mackenzie Wood-



The Eagle/Angel Carpenter

Winners of the Veterans of Foreign War's Voice of Democracy essay contest are Grant Union students Taylor McCluskey, left, first place, \$200; Mackenzie Woodcock, second, \$150; and Joshua Taynton, third, \$100. VFW Commander and Chief Gregg Starr presented the students with their awards at the school Nov. 24.

cock, second place, \$150; and Josh Taynton, third place, \$100.

Judging the essays were Ken Delano, Buzz Gilmore, Jim Jerome and Starr.

Starr said he was pleased with the effort the students put into the contest, and the essays showed a love and respect for the country.

"They were well thought out," he said. "They took

the time to do the job, write and read it, and record it."

McCluskey's essay and audio recording were forwarded to the district contest in Athena. The state contest is judged in Newport.

The state winner receives a minimum scholarship of \$1,000 and an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C. The national winner receives a \$30,000 scholarship.

The program is open to students in grades 9-12.

The VFW post has had a presence in Grant County for over 50 years.

The group holds monthly meetings on the third Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m. at the volunteer fire training hall in John Day on South Canyon Boulevard.

Starr said members of the VFW are veterans of foreign wars who were part of a combat zone.



The deadline for What's Happening items is 5 p.m. Friday. Call Cheryl at the Eagle, 541-575-0710.

## THURSDAY-FRIDAY, DEC. 3-4

### Holiday Dance Showcase

• 7 p.m., Grant Union High School old gym

Dancers in the high school team and Body, Fitness and Dance, ages 4 through high school, will perform in the annual holiday event. Admission is \$5 and a canned food item.

## FRIDAY, DEC. 4

### Carrie Young Memorial Lodge

The annual by-donation spaghetti dinner, which includes silent and live auctions, supports the elderly in Grant County. Proceeds go toward the purchase of gifts and every day living items for patients in local assisted living facilities, plus 150 homebound elderly and handicapped people. To donate or for more information, contact Lucie Immoos at 541-620-2098.

## SATURDAY, DEC. 5

### Two holiday bazaars

• 9 a.m.-4 p.m., Grant County Fairgrounds, John Day

The Blue Mountain Hospital Auxiliary bazaar will be in Trowbridge Pavilion, and the fairgrounds bazaar will be in Keerins Hall. Together, they feature dozens of vendors offering an array of crafts and other goods. There will be several gift drawings in Keerins Hall, and soup and pie will be available in the Pavilion. Santa Claus will be there too, so bring your camera. Call the fair office, 541-575-1900.

## THURSDAY, DEC. 10

### Light up a Life

• 6 p.m., Valley View Assisted Living, John Day

All are welcome to the candlelight remembrance which honors loved ones who have died. The service, organized by Blue Mountain Hospice, includes readings, music and refreshments. For more information, email [sdowdy@blue-mountainhospital.org](mailto:sdowdy@blue-mountainhospital.org).



Contributed photo

Hospice director Sylvia Dowdy offers an introduction at the 2014 Light up a Life remembrance. This year's event will be at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 10, at Valley View Assisted Living in John Day.

## FRIDAY, DEC. 11

### Forest plan meeting

• 6-9 p.m., Grant County Regional Airport, John Day

The public meeting is part of a series scheduled by the Forest Service to discuss the Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision. The topic will be "Pace and Scale of Restoration," presented by Malheur National Forest. A facilitator will be present to ensure those attending have time to speak, listen and propose solutions.

### Community choirs debut performance

• 7 p.m., United Methodist Church, John Day

The Juniper Arts Council presents Youth Arts Program students in an evening of holiday music and more. Admission is by donation and proceeds benefit the Youth Arts Program.

## FRIDAY-SATURDAY, DEC. 11-12

### Christmas Mt. Vernon

• 9 a.m.-4 p.m., Mt. Vernon

Several businesses in Mt. Vernon have teamed up to present an annual holiday shopping feast of handcrafted items and gifts, door prizes and refreshments. Participating merchants include: Shiny Thimble Quilt Studio at the northeast corner of highways 26 and 395; Lou's Heartfelt Quilting, 430 Mountain Blvd., Maudean Brown's home, 711 Mountain Blvd.; Patricia Ross, and friends, arts and crafts studio, 311 Ingle St.; and Racers Restaurant – formerly the Silver Spur – offering hot chocolate and coffee for half price. Watch for the red and green balloons. Call 541-932-4503 or 541-932-4707 for more information.

## SATURDAY, DEC. 12

### AARP Smart Driver course

• 9 a.m.-4 p.m., John Day Senior Center

Topics include defensive driving techniques, safety strategies, and new traffic laws and rules of the road. Those attending should bring a lunch. The cost is \$15 for AARP members and \$20 for all others. Sign up at the senior center or call Ron Dowse, 541-575-4268 or 541-792-0587.

### Timber Truckers Light Parade

• 6 p.m., downtown John Day

This year's theme is "An Old-Fashioned Christmas." Winners will be announced at the Elks Lodge following the parade. The entry fee is \$10; preregistration is encouraged. Call 541-620-4032 or 541-575-1862.

## Forest Service offers free trees

Blue Mountain Eagle

Fourth-graders are eligible for a free holiday tree permit through the U.S. Forest Service's "Every Kid in a Park" initiative.

Malheur National Forest offices in John Day, Prairie City and Hines will be open extended hours, until 5:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 3, and open from 8 a.m.-noon Saturday, Dec. 5, to accommodate fourth-graders who live outside the area and can't get in during regular operating hours. Students can visit [www.everykidinapark.gov](http://www.everykidinapark.gov) and follow the instructions to obtain and print a paper voucher, which can then be presented at any national forest office to receive the permit.

Students must be present with the voucher to receive their pass as well as the free Christmas tree permit.

Local Malheur National Forest offices are at 431 Patterson Bridge Road in John Day and 327 SW Front St. in Prairie City.

**ATTENTION GRANT COUNTY VETERANS:**  
Did you know there may be VA benefits available for you as a result of your spouses' military service?  
See your Grant County Veteran Services Officer today for more information, located at Grant County Court House.  
\* Call 541-575-1631 for an appointment \*  
Open: Mon, Wed, & Fri 10am-4pm by appointment.

**Please return our dog. Reward**

If you have any information, please contact the Grant County Sheriff's Department  
**541-575-1131**

**BOOK YOUR CHRISTMAS PARTY WITH US!**  
We still have a few openings.

Call the John Day Golf Course Clubhouse at 541-575-0170 and ask for Jessy or Ronda

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**AGCO PARTS**

Howdy, howdy, friends and neighbors! Cowboy Chapel Chaplain Richie here wishing everyone a very Merry Christmas & a happy New Year! December wraps up six wonderful years on KJDY Sunday mornings being a blessing and being blessed. Along with playing hymns from our 3,000 song library, we were able to respond to most of your requests. We have played everything from Pavarotti to blue grass patriotic to country western, even Steve Martin's used log truck. We loved all the cards, letters, phone calls, texts and friendly waves. Thank you and God bless.

**Winter WONDERLAND**

**RICHLAND, WASHINGTON**

Join us for Winter Wonderland, presented by BMW of Tri-Cities. Tree lighting, performances, family-friendly activities and festivities for all ages!

**DECEMBER 3 FROM 5:00 P.M. TO 8:00 P.M.**  
Uptown Shopping Center Open House  
• Featuring luminaries outside participating store fronts  
• Central United Protestant Choir  
• Special customer treats, specials, and gift certificates  
• Visit Santa

**Uptown Theater 6:00 p.m.**  
Free Holiday Classic Movie: White Christmas

**DECEMBER 4 @ 6:00 P.M.**  
Warming Fire by the Lee Blvd. Dock  
Lighted Boat Parade  
Santa House, with Santa, the Grinch, Olaf, and an elf too!  
Horse Drawn Carriage Ride - Vendor  
Food Vendors

**Richland Community Center**  
• Model Railroad Display  
• Mid-Columbia Ballet: Nutcracker Excerpt and Photo Opportunity  
• Professional Entertainment  
• Bingo with Santa's Elf  
• Holiday Movie

**DECEMBER 5 @ 5:00 P.M.**  
Holiday Mini-Parade and Tree Lighting  
Warming Fire and Entertainment by the Lee Blvd. Dock  
Lighted Boat Parade  
Santa House, with Santa, the Grinch, Olaf and an elf too!  
Horse Drawn Carriage Ride - Vendor  
Holiday Movie on a Giant Outdoor Screen: Polar Express  
Food Vendors

**Richland Community Center**  
• Bouncy Land  
• Model Railroad Display  
• Bingo with Santa's Elf  
• Holiday Crafts

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"Inclement weather may delay arrival & departure times."