

STUDENTS

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Brazilian Raquel Melo Silva, 17, said she enjoyed the community atmosphere and being so close to animals, ranches and the farming way of life.

Andrea Montes, 16, from Spain, agreed.

“I’ve become a country girl,” she said.

Lilly said in a small school and town like Long Creek “you can develop relationships with everyone.”

Each of the students said they experienced something for the first time. Raquel got to brand and feed cows. Lilly helped skin an elk, which she said was “cool and interesting.” Andrea ate her first corn dog — a new favorite food.

Philipp got to go horseback riding, as did 16-year-old Near (Yanatorn) Bunnag from Thailand.

Mew (Onnalin) Wiriyasumon, 16, from Thailand, went ice fishing — her first time fishing at all — during a trip to Alaska with her host family. Adam (Adugafor) Rajibeliev, 17, from Tajikistan, enjoyed hunting and skiing.

Others attended a rodeo and rode along with a police officer for the first time.

For Aaron (Yu\_Cheng) Yueng, 18, Taiwan, it was a



From left, Near (Yanatorn) Bunnag, Aaron (Yu\_Cheng) Yueng, Kirill Borisov, Fernando Garcia Rodriguez, Lilly Stemann, Philipp Dessau, Raquel Melo Silva and, in front, Andrea Montes at Seattle’s bayfront during spring break. Mew (Onnalin) Wiriyasumon was in Alaska with her host family.

close encounter with nature after he saw a deer right in town.

“I never saw a deer before,” he said. “I could not believe it and was so surprised.”

While small-town life was new for all of them, the cold and snow of winter was not.

Russian 17-year-old Kirill Borisov, who snowboards back home nearly every day, said, “It wasn’t so cold here.”

Philipp agreed and said it is never warm in Germany. Lil-

ly, however, said she’d never been somewhere so cold.

Fernando Garcia Rodriguez, 17, from Spain, said he tried to teach some downhill skiing skills to first-timer Raquel during a school outing to Anthony Lakes Mountain Resort. They both laughed at the memory of her tumbling down the hill.

The students all agreed American education is much easier than in their home countries. Some were surprised that not only is there no school here on Saturdays but, as in most Grant County schools, none on Fridays either.

The exchange program offers a multi-cultural experience for the visiting and local students, the host fami-

lies and the community. With only three local Long Creek high school students this year — two freshmen and one junior — the foreign students also provide the school with increased enrollment for such activities as proms and sports teams.

One of those three local students, Cody Baker, said, if it wasn’t for the foreign students, he would probably have to attend a different school. He said in three years at Long Creek, he has met three different groups of foreign students and has more than two dozen friends around the world.

“It’s a really cool experience,” he said. “The first month or two, it’s hard getting to know each other, but by the

department. She said she brings budgeting, accounting and government experience.

Weaver said she moved to the area in junior high school and has been here since. She said she worked her way up to office manager at Chester’s Thriftway, where she worked for 30 years. As the current fair manager, she said she has experience with grants and the county budget. She said she would bring accuracy, honesty and accountability to the position.

Public Forest Commission

Six Public Forest Commission seats are also up for election.

Dave Traylor is running unopposed for Public Forest Commission No. 1. He said, although the Blue Mountains Forest Partners collaborative has increased timber harvest by working with environmentalists, the amount is not what it used to be or what it ought to be.

Tad Houpt will also be the only candidate on the ballot for No. 3 after Mark Webb was removed due to an issue with his official party affiliation. Webb did not attend the forum. Houpt said the forest is in poor shape, increasing the risk for wildfires, and that harvesting larger trees would be more effective.

Jim Boethin, King Williams and Howard Gieger are running for forest commission No. 5. Boethin and Williams did not attend the forum. Gieger said he was formerly an arson investigator, and he believed the Forest Service should pay for an independent investigation into the Canyon Creek Complex fire. He said he has stressed the importance of communication to members of the Forest Partners, the forest commission and



The Eagle/Cheryl Hoefler  
Foreign students Lilly Stemann of Germany, left, and Mew (Onnalin) Wiriyasumon of Thailand enjoy friendship and new experiences at Long Creek School.

end, we form such a strong bond, it’s hard to see them leave. Some become your family.”

Several of the host families have taken these students into their homes year after year, including Linda and Ed Studtmann, hosting in Long Creek since 2008.

“We treat them as if they are part of the family,” Linda, who is a teaching assistant and coach at the school, said. “We keep them busy.”

She said she loves hosting and her own sons, who are now grown, enjoyed getting to know the foreign students each year, having them in their home and as school friends.

Linda and Alvin Hunt have had 11 foreign students in their home — each experience different but always entertaining.

Linda Hunt, who works in the school cafeteria, said hosting allows her to experience the world without leaving the county.

She said, although it is difficult “saying goodbye to


someone who has become such a wonderful part of your life, we have a lifetime of memories to look back on and smile.”

Other host families this year include Mike and Myla Corley, Jennie and Patch Freeman, Shirley Gorgita and Bev and Eldon Johns.

The foreign students all had high praise for their host families, most saying that the home-cooked American meals were one of the best things. Most plan to keep in touch with each other and their new Long Creek friends and families, and several would like to return to visit Long Creek in the future.

None of the students knew each other beforehand. However, two of them, Philipp and Lilly, discovered from a photo Lilly had that they belong to the same dance group back in Germany, where they live just a few miles apart.

The world itself, and not just Long Creek, can be a mighty small place.





## Notice

### Grant County Taxpayers

**The third installment of the 2015-2016 property tax is due Monday, May 16, 2016 by 5 p.m.**

Payments may be made at the tax collector's office at the Grant County Courthouse in Canyon City, or the payment may be mailed and POSTMARKED no later than May 16, 2016. Please remember that delinquent taxes accrue interest at the rate of 16% per year.

**If you have any questions, please call the Tax Office at 541-575-0107 or 541-575-0189. PO Box 185 Canyon City, OR 97820**



VOTERS

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work experience, including accounting and title work. She said she was a senior accounts clerk for John Day and currently works for the county road



We know this to be true - a community thrives when people work together and can express their opinions without fear of threat, intimidation and retaliation. Our group, **Grant County Positive Action**, was formed in response to our concern that these conditions are being undermined in our community.

We are local residents with a wide range of political opinions, but all of us share a belief that problems need to be settled peacefully, respectfully and lawfully. We believe that incivility, intimidation, undemocratic tactics and hidden agendas damage our community.

For that reason, we are working to find common ground through civil discourse and education. Our intention is to speak civilly and factually as we work to find solutions that balance the needs of various groups. A successful example is the collaboration that recently brought four million dollars to our county. The collaboration process was messy, slow and frustrating, but unlike antagonism or an armed takeover, it worked!

Some of our activities to date have been to regularly attend County Court meetings to listen and share ideas. We carefully research the issues in order to present factual information that will encourage civil discussion. Many of our members have submitted Letters to the Editor in the Blue Mountain Eagle. We have demonstrated peacefully and lawfully at several events to highlight the message that destructive activities, such as taking over public lands, will not help our county to move forward.

Our goal is to keep Grant County a welcoming and safe place to live.

As we witnessed in Harney County, a minority of local supporters and outside militia groups sowed the seeds of division in the community, seeking to divide the county around issues such as forest management and grazing rights.

There is also a militia presence in Grant County. Their leaders and actions have encouraged militia groups across the nation to see Grant County as a friendly haven. Their wider goals are explained in their affiliation with groups such as the Oath Keepers, Constitutional Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association, III% militias, and the Pacific Patriot Network (an association of militias). These groups work to build their base by spreading misinformation and making unsubstantiated allegations. They often achieve power through intimidation. Are these tactics what we want to see in Grant County? At a time when local residents are experiencing this intimidation, we need to become informed of the full range of ideas that these leaders stand for.

The solution to the division in our community rests with all of us. If the community as a whole fails to speak out in support of established lawful values, our county’s livability and economy will both suffer. We need to stand up to the spreading of falsehoods and other bullying behaviors, while we support our leaders who work toward positive solutions. As local residents, let’s work together to be fact-based and proactive, while at the same time grappling with the difficulties that confront us.

**Grant County Positive Action**  
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Photo: Grant County, Oregon



The Eagle/Sean Hart  
Public Forest Commission candidate Sam Palmer, right, speaks at a candidate forum April 23.

the Grant County Court.

“We are not working together, and I think this is extremely important,” he said.

Larry Blasing and Jim Sproul are vying for No. 7.

Blasing said he received a degree in forest management and has 45 years of experience working on forest issues. He said he worked for the Forest Service, then the forest products industry and a timber industry association. He said he’s been involved in contract negotiations between agencies and the industry, appealing the first environmental impact statement after the National Environmental Policy Act and passing the National Forest Management Act.

Sproul said he was born and raised here where his family has lived since 1878. He said he was a rancher and later became a Realtor. He said he was involved in creating a natural resources plan through the sheriff’s office that was “stomped out” by other agencies. The amount of acres burned annually on the forest has increased, and policy changes are needed for better timber management as well as fine fuels, which are “like gasoline.”

Mike Smith and Dave Hannibal are running for forest commission Alternate No. 1. Mike Smith did not attend the forum. Hannibal said he has worked in forestry since 1980. He said he has been in John Day since 1994, and he has hired hundreds of local kids to work at Grayback Forestry. As a Forest Partners member, he said he believes the forest commission and collaborative have different approaches but the same goal.

“I’m not taking anything over,” he said. “I’m trying to step up and do what’s right.”

Sam Palmer and Russ Young are vying for Alternate No. 2. Young did not attend the forum. Palmer said he is a nurse and owns a small logging operation. He said he has no forestry degree but experience, including 10 years as a firefighter on the Malheur National Forest. He said he has seen a decline in forest health and he and a business partner lost \$1.5 million in timber in the Canyon Creek Complex. He said the collaborative should be stopped and that firefighting is “big business” for some people.

Measure 12-58

This measure is a Grant County citizen initiative regarding commercial marijuana operations currently legal in the state but banned in the county.

A “yes” vote would overturn the county ban and allow the growing, processing, wholesaling, testing and retail selling of marijuana. A “yes” vote would also make the county eligible to receive a portion of the 17-percent tax to be levied on retail sales at the state level, as well as a 3-percent tax possible at the local level.

A “no” vote would retain the county ban on all commercial marijuana operations, and the county would remain ineligible to receive any tax revenue from marijuana sales. A “no” vote would have no effect on a person’s ability to legally possess and grow marijuana for personal use in accordance with state law.



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