



THE MISSION:

To seek out and destroy junipers

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Baker City Police Department Sgt. Wayne Chastain explains to Prairie City School students how he works with his drug-detecting K-9, Capa, after the dog sniffed lockers at the school March 7. No drugs were found at Prairie City or Grant Union Junior-Senior High School.

Two occupiers guilty of conspiracy in Malheur standoff

By Conrad Wilson
Oregon Public Broadcasting

A federal jury has convicted occupiers Jason Patrick and Darryl Thorn on felony conspiracy charges for their roles in last year's armed takeover of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge.

Defendants Duane Ehmer and Jake Ryan were acquitted of conspiracy, but convicted on lesser felony charges.

Patrick, Thorn, Ehmer and Ryan were considered less prominent players in last year's 41-day occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in a remote part of Eastern Oregon's high desert. The armed protest began Jan. 2, 2016, and ended when the final four occupiers surrendered to the FBI Feb. 11 during a dramatic conclusion that spanned several hours and was broadcast live on the internet.

The verdict in this second trial comes after three weeks of testimony and more than two days of deliberations.

All four were charged with conspiracy to impede federal employees through force, threats and intimidation — the same charge the occupation's leaders, brothers Ammon and Ryan Bundy, were acquitted of during another federal trial last fall.

Ryan, Thorn and Patrick also were charged with carrying a firearm in a federal facility. Ryan and Ehmer were charged with depredation of government property.

The jury delivered the following verdict:

- Jason Patrick guilty of conspiracy; not guilty of carrying a firearm in a federal facility

- Darryl Thorn guilty of conspiracy; guilty of carrying a firearm in a federal facility

- Jake Ryan not guilty of conspiracy; not guilty of carrying a firearm in a federal facility; guilty of depredation of government property

- Duane Ehmer not guilty of conspiracy; guilty of depredation of government property

The verdicts mark a stark contrast to last year's trial, when a different jury acquitted seven occupiers on all counts.

K-9 sniffs lockers but no illicit substances found

By Sean Hart
Blue Mountain Eagle

Capa, a drug-detecting K-9, had a busy day at local schools last week.

Baker City Police Department Sgt. Wayne Chastain brought the 3-year-old Belgian Malinois-German shepherd mixed breed to Grant County March 7 at the request of John Day Police Chief Richard Gray. The K-9 sniffed lockers for drugs and demonstrated its drug-finding ability for students, while Chastain explained how he works with Capa.

"The dog is trained to find odor but not drugs," he said.

When the dog smells an odor it has been trained

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Capa, a 3-year-old Belgian Malinois-German shepherd mixed breed drug K-9, and handler Sgt. Wayne Chastain of Baker City Police Department check school lockers for drug odors March 7.

Contributed photos

Election vacancies remain day before deadline

Prairie City School District race contested

By Sean Hart
Blue Mountain Eagle

Time is running out to file to run for local board positions up for election in May.

Grant County Clerk Brenda Percy said the deadline to file is 5 p.m. Thursday, March 16, and no one had filed to run for several positions as of Tuesday afternoon.

Grant County Education Service District Zone No. 5, as well as an at-large position, have no candidates. Not enough people have filed to fill all the open at-large positions for Prairie Rural Fire District, John Day Canyon City Parks and Recreation, Fox Cemetery District, Mid-Coun-

ty Cemetery District and Monument Cemetery District.

Only one race is currently contested. Andrea Ennis and Justin Jacobs have both filed to run for Prairie City School District No. 4's Position No. 1. Nancy Hitz, Lindsay Rausch and Mike Wall are running unopposed for the other three positions.

Kelly Stokes, Josh Walker, Ben Holliday and Chris Cronin are running for the four Grant School District No. 3 positions. Vonda Stubblefield, Elizabeth Lovelock, Jeff Thomas and Maria Thomas are running for the four Monument School District No. 8 positions. Babette Larson, Casey Fretwell and Tandi Merkord are running for the three Dayville School District No. 16J positions. Patti Hudson, Marsiellette Watson, Bubba Wainwright and

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Your Taxes: The budget process

By Sean Hart
Blue Mountain Eagle

Members of the governing body of local tax districts have the most impact on how taxes are spent.

The people chosen for these positions in the May election will serve on and appoint other members to future budget committees that develop the plans to provide public services with available resources.

Most districts perform the budget process annually, though biennial 24-month budgets are also allowed.

In addition to the opportunity to

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