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The Grant County's newspaper since 1868
Blue Mountain EAGLE

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 29, 2017

• No. 13

• 20 PAGES

• \$1.00

www.MyEagleNews.com

A view of the John Day valley taken Saturday, March 25. The Eagle/Rylan Boggs

GUARDIANS OF FREEDOM

Students share thoughts on patriotism

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

Twelve Grant School District No. 3 students were recognized for their winning Americanism essay contest entries at the American Legion and Auxiliary Post No. 77 meeting in John Day March 20.

About 90 students penned patriotic essays, answering the question, "How does learning about government and our America help you become a future guardian of the liberties of our country?"

The students read their essays after a potluck dinner in front of family and friends and leaders of the American Legion and Auxiliary.

Americanism co-chairs are Sherry Feiger and Jessie Lewis, taking over for Joan Bowling who passed away in December.

The judges, Shermayne Boethin, Paul Smith and Kathy Smith, were recognized, as well as the teachers who included the essay in their lesson plans as a class assignment.

Grant Union freshman Samantha Floyd said the contest was a good opportunity.

"It's good to bring awareness of our country because we often don't think about our country with everything that's going on in our lives," she said.

Grant Union sophomore Madi McKrola said she liked the topic.

"It made us think about the importance of being an informed citizen," she said.

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"It made us think about the importance of being an informed citizen"

Madi McKrola, Grant Union sophomore

How does learning about government and our America help you become a future guardian of the liberties of our country?

By Annie Wall, Grant Union junior

As Americans, we see our country as a place of freedom, happiness, and prosperity. No one but ourselves have made it this way. Americans involved in their country have made it the beautiful place that it is. We are our own protectors. We are able to take pride in our country because of what we have done to

make it this way. As an American, it is our civic duty to learn about our country's history and government so we may be the guardians of the United States of America. No one but ourselves can hold this country up; it is the children of America that are going to dictate the outcome of our country in the upcoming years, and we cannot be prepared to do so without knowing our country.

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Annie Wall



The Eagle/Angel Carpenter

Americanism essay winners gather at the Ellis Tracy American Legion Hall Post No. 77 in John Day. Front from left, Eliza Ashley, Vincent Raschio, Hunter Noel, Monel Anderson and Macy Carter; back row, Raney Anderson, Trinity Hutchison, Madi McKrola, Josh Carpenter, McKenna Adair and Samantha Floyd.



Sidney Dean Porter

Porter released, residing in Monument

By Sean Hart
Blue Mountain Eagle

Twenty-five years after killing a John Day police officer, Sidney Dean Porter is back in Grant County.

Porter, 57, was released from custody Friday, March 24, and transported by family members to the Monument area, where he will reside "for the time being," Grant County District Attorney Jim Carpenter said. Porter will be supervised on parole by Grant County Community Corrections.

Community Corrections Director Todd McKinley said the department will work to help Porter succeed outside of prison.

"I respect the wide range of emotion that the release of Mr. Porter invokes," he said. "However, I and those I work with are committed to fulfilling our role in helping Mr. Porter be a successful citizen in good standing in Grant County."

Porter pleaded guilty to aggravated murder for the 1992 killing of Officer Frank Ward, who had responded to a report of domestic violence at Porter's residence. Porter "bludgeoned Ward with his fists and a 10-pound piece of firewood," according to court documents.

A lack of evidence provided at an exit interview in 2013 and legal errors by the Board of Parole and Post-Prison Supervision hastened Porter's release. The parole board issued a prison release date in 2013 after little evidence was presented at a required exit interview, but the date was postponed after further evidence was provided. The board, however, did not hold a hearing with Porter at the time of the postponement.

The Oregon Court of Appeals ruled the parole board should not have postponed his release without "a timely hearing" and reinstated the 2013 release date because of the legal errors by the board. The Oregon Supreme Court denied a request to review the appeals court decision.

Carpenter, who fought to keep Porter imprisoned, said it is "time to move forward."

"With regard to Mr. Porter, our community has a wide variety of opinions as to what 'should be,'" he said. "As district attorney, I have to accept and work with 'what is.' In terms of incarceration, Mr. Porter is deemed to have paid his debt to society. ... I hope that Grant County will set aside any outward expressions of malice and proceed with cautious optimism."

Obamacare replacement shot down

Republicans unable to secure enough votes to pass American Health Care Act

By Rylan Boggs
Blue Mountain Eagle

Unable to gather the necessary votes, the U.S. House of Representatives postponed voting on the American Health Care Act, which would have replaced Obamacare.

"Obamacare is the law of the land. It's going to remain the law of the land until it's replaced. We did not have quite the votes to replace this law," Speaker of the House Paul Ryan said in a press conference. "We're going to be living with Obamacare for the foreseeable future."



The Eagle/Rylan Boggs

U.S. Rep. Greg Walden (R-Ore.) speaks to community members during a town hall meeting in the Mt. Vernon community center on Thursday, Feb. 9.

The bill, supported by U.S. Rep. Greg Walden, would have phased out Obamacare's Medicaid expansion, which could have had significant impacts in rural Oregon.

As many as 375,000 Oregonians cov-

ered by the Oregon Health Plan under the Medicaid expansion could have lost health care coverage unless the state paid a greater percentage of the cost, according to a recent Oregon Center for Public Policy report.

"Oregon's Medicaid program would take a bigger hit than nearly all other states, should the GOP proposal be enacted," the report, authored by Janet Bauer, said. "This is because the federal Medicaid expansion dollars support a larger share of our Medicaid program budget than in nearly every other state."

The Republican replacement would have phased out additional federal matching dollars for Medicaid beginning in 2020. Until then, people could have still signed on to the Oregon Health Plan to receive Medicaid. After 2020, those enrolled would continue to be covered

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