

Meditation and wellness center opens in John Day

Center features an outdoor labyrinthine path

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

A circular-patterned, stone-lined labyrinth path may have raised curiosity for some folks driving by the east side of John Day.

At the top of the driveway leading to the labyrinth and a new building is a sign: "Canyon Mountain Center."

Jim and Sandy Bay of Mt. Vernon recently opened the center, which is a place for meditation, yoga and wellness, at 767 E. Main St. in John Day.

Sandy said she's found healing through meditation and other methods since 1987, which she said has allowed her to heal herself and re-create her future.

"I'm letting go of the past and living in the moment," she said. "It's been quite a journey."

Jim has been practicing meditation since 1970.

"When you start taking care of yourself physically, it carries over to other areas," he said.

The couple bought the property, which used to be home to the Rock Garden Nursery, two years ago. On Jan. 20, 40 visitors dropped in for their open house.

The couple started a meditation group with friends in 2010 at a location on Hillcrest Road in John Day, but the Bays felt it was time for a more dedicated spot.

"We built this facility because there was no central location large enough to support a focus on complementary health practices," Jim said.

He described the center as a space



The Eagle/Angel Carpenter

Jim and Sandy Bay stand near the John Day River on the north side of their new meditation center at 767 E. Main St. in John Day.

for people to focus on their health and wellness, stress reduction techniques and personal growth.

The center, an olive green building, has a multipurpose room for meditation nights, yoga classes and lectures. A few geode crystals and cast-stone art decorate the minimalist 28-by-32-foot room. An adjacent room is for group meetings, discussions and consultations.

West of the facility is the labyrinth path. Sandy said it's modeled after one built in the 13th century at Chartres Cathedral in France.

"There are labyrinths all over the world and in different religions," Jim said.

"They're popular at hospitals to let go of stress," Sandy added.

Sandy and three other women built the labyrinth, which is 36 feet wide with black sand, fine enough to walk on barefoot in warmer months.

The circular pathway, with seven revolutions, leads to the center then back out again.

Sandy said, "The first phase (entering the path) is to release issues or problems."

She said in the middle of the labyrinth, "you receive guidance from whatever force you call on. When you go back out, it's integration of the guidance you received."

The process, she said, helps release old patterns.

"It's a way to calm yourself and focus," she said.

"—and rebalance," Jim added.

Another feature outside is a rock garden, gazebo and fire pit, as well as a brick staircase leading down to the John Day River. A vacation rental with three bedrooms, two living rooms, a kitchen and two bathrooms sits above the rock garden.

Rod Hendriksen of Prairie City remodeled the house and built the meditation center.

"We had the design, and he created it for us," Jim said.

The Bays said the property, while not a public park, is a gift they want to share with the community.

"It's payback for our good lives here and for this valley. ... It's not about us," Jim said, adding it can help people "catch their breath, slow down and recenter."



The Eagle/Angel Carpenter

A labyrinthine path outside the Canyon Mountain Center offers an area to focus and regroup.

"We wanted people to have fun and come join us," Sandy said. "It's for people to come find themselves."

Free meditation sessions are on Monday nights at 5:30 p.m., with a short time to talk and share experiences at 6 p.m. Novice meditation instruction starts at 5 p.m.

Yoga classes taught by Anne Schneider will begin in mid-February.

"There is now a space dedicated to help promote those healthy lifestyle choices," Jim said. "We welcome those of like mind who want to contribute to and participate in this goal."

For more information, visit CanyonMountainCenter.net or call Jim at 415-748-8697 or Sandy at 415-515-6316.

Long Creek student shares history of Kilbride Cemetery

Senior spruces up cemetery on family ranch

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

Faith Burnette may be new to Long Creek School — transferring from Imbler High School — but she was born just up the road on her family's ranch near Ritter.

Burnette seized the opportunity to spruce up a small cemetery and spend time with family in Grant County for her senior project, learning some history along the way.

When she began looking for a project, her uncle, who is a Ritter Cemetery caretaker, suggested fixing up the Kilbride Cemetery.

Kilbride is located on Burnette's great-grandmother's ranch, about a mile east of Highway 395, the cemetery



Faith Burnette

approximately three miles farther.

"I thought it was a great way to preserve history and keep the history of the cemetery going," said 18-year-old Burnette.

Known as Willow Creek Cemetery by Burnette and her family, the 3/4-acre plot includes the marked graves of 15 people and four unmarked graves.

It's also the final resting place of a well-known Long Creek racehorse named Pin Ears, who died in 1902 and was owned by Sherm Keeney.

Most of the people buried on the grounds died in the late 1800s or early 1900s. Her great-grandfather Fred Burnette, who died in 2012, is also buried there.

Faith Burnette said she noticed the fencing around



Contributed photo

Faith Burnette's brother, Jayce, in white, grandfather, Ron Burnette, kneeling, and cousin, Clay Somnis, build one of the four corner braces at the Kilbride Cemetery, also known as Willow Creek Cemetery.

the cemetery's perimeter, which was likely untouched for 70 years, was run down and wasn't withstanding the wildlife and cows roaming the ranch.

Last fall, she and 14 family

members gathered for a work day, building a taller fence and topping it with barbed wire to deter deer.

"My family and I tore out the old fence. Then we put in the new one," she said. "It

stayed pretty much along the old lines, but we had to adjust it just a little bit."

A couple gravestones that had fallen over were uprighted.

Faith Burnette said she learned the Kilbride Cemetery, established in the 1870s, was named by Margaret Hamilton (1861-1934), who was postmistress of the nearby Kilbride Post Office along the Middle Fork John Day River. "Kilbride" originates from Hamilton's birthplace in Kilbride, Scotland.

Those buried at the Kilbride Cemetery include: Fred Burnette, William Casey, Adah Childress, William Howard, Felix Johnson Jr., Alvin Kinder, James Kinder,

Martha Kinder, Francis Livingston, Henry Miller, Irene Reich, Sammie Reynolds and Jennie Reynolds.

Jacqueline Burnette said she was pleased with her great-granddaughter's work.

"She did a great job," Jacqueline Burnette said.

Faith Burnette said she was born near the cemetery, and plans to be buried there as well one day.

"I was glad that I was able to help," she said. "This was a way to help my community and spend time with family."

Kilbride is a county cemetery, on private land. To visit the cemetery or for more information, call cemetery board chairwoman Jacqueline Burnette at 541-421-3840.

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