

LOVE

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Laurie recalls her friend Cindy Kowing Davis made the wedding cake. Kathy's dress was made by Bobbie Officer, and Laurie had earlier driven with Charlie to Ontario to buy her gown.

"We each had a bouquet of red roses," Laurie said. "It was simple."

Kathy added she and her sister stood in as bride's maids, and the brothers were best men for each other.

Pastor Milo Franke officiated the wedding ceremony at the Assembly of God Church in John Day on what was the last day of the elk hunt.

"We always say that last half day of elk season is the definition of love," Kathy said.

Both pairs honeymooned at the Kah-Nee-Ta Resort in Warm Springs.

Years have passed.

Kathy is now the Grant County justice of the peace, and Laurie is secretary and educational assistant at Seneca School. Frank is a retired plumber, and Charlie a re-



Frank and Kathy Stinnett, posing at Kathy's office at the Grant County Courthouse last week, celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary last November. Kathy's sister Laurie and Frank's brother Charlie share the same anniversary.

The Eagle/Angel Carpenter

tired contractor.

The couples' 40th wedding anniversary was three months ago. No matter what their anniversary date is, the Stinnetts always celebrate on the last day of the elk hunt.

When asked how they

made it this far, Laurie said every circumstance is different, but for her, marriage has been "like sailing a ship."

"You have rough times and good times and in-between times," she said.

Laurie said, while Charlie

was watching TV recently, he said to their son, "Well, we don't fight that much" — and Laurie added, "It's not unhealthy to disagree."

Frank said staying together is a series of compromises. "You've got to listen

to what they say," he said. "You're going to have moments — you're two individuals — but you have to think of the other person."

He added the marriage vow isn't just to each other.

"That vow is to God," he said.

They each added that it helped to marry a good person.

Kathy and Frank have one daughter and two sons, and Laurie and Charlie have one daughter and three sons.

"The first two were born a month apart, and after that it was a stair step," Laurie said, adding her last son was born a few years later.

Kathy said the best result of siblings marrying siblings has been seeing their children grow up together.

"They are as close as brothers and sisters can be," she said, adding, "We camp together and celebrate holidays together."

Valentine's Day traditions in the close-knit family continue.

Although they didn't have a double wedding, Kathy and Frank's sons also married sisters.

TAX

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with minimum bids and possibly hiring a broker to handle the sales.

According to state law, "real property within this state is subject to foreclosure for delinquent taxes whenever three years have elapsed from the earliest date of delinquency of taxes levied and charged thereon."

"We have taken an oath to uphold the federal and state constitution and the laws of the state, and property owners are required to pay taxes," Myers said.

Grant County District Attorney Jim Carpenter filed for foreclosure on 42 properties in Grant County Circuit Court. Judge William D. Cramer Jr. issued a foreclosure judgment on the properties on April 8, 2016.

The owners then had two years to redeem the properties by paying any taxes, interest and fees owed to the county. During that two-year window, Grant County spent \$200 apiece on a title search to see if any liens existed on the properties.

The back taxes for the 42 properties totaled \$171,460 at the time of the judgment. With interest accrued to that time, the amount totaled \$364,756 — more than double the taxes owed.

As of Feb. 7, eight of the 42 properties have been redeemed, reducing the total owed to \$305,468. Ten properties had back taxes from the 1980s, and six had back taxes from the 1990s. Thirteen properties were owned by people living in California, Arizona or Washington. Ownership of four properties was unknown.

The most taxes plus interest owed for a property on the list was \$78,601 — a 0.41-acre property on Beech Creek Road in Mt. Vernon. Just next door is a 1.6-acre property with \$29,819 owed in back taxes and interest — the second highest on the list. A short distance away is a 0.03-acre sliver of land on the shoulder of Highway 395 with \$232 in back taxes and interest owed.

The least amount owed on the list was \$91, but that property has little value — consisting of a 0.06-acre slice of land in Canyon City where Patterson Drive had been relocated. A 19.87-acre property with \$8,077 in back taxes and interest owed since 2000 is the Horace Worcester Mine property.

While some properties have little value because of their size, shape and location, others present liabilities. Myers said the county is reluctant about becoming a landlord — particularly if the tenants live in dilapidated residences.

The most valuable property on the list, according to Grant County Assessor David Thunell, is a 12.8-acre undeveloped property on Orchard View Road in Kimberly. The rectangular parcel extends from orchard land on the North Fork of the John Day River to steep slopes overlooking the valley. A total of \$3,411 in back taxes and interest is owed on this property. An adjacent parcel that is similar has been listed for \$175,000.

Thunell said he will suggest minimum bids for some properties to the county court. He also wants as many of the properties as possible sold before July 1 so they can be put back on the tax rolls.

"Otherwise they would be exempt from taxes for the next year," he said.

Cramer issued a foreclosure judgment on four more properties on Oct. 17, 2016, with back taxes and interest totaling \$9,516. A foreclosure judgment on four more properties was made on Dec. 20, with back taxes and interest totaling \$48,086.

Thunell said he expects the county will continue to pursue tax foreclosures every year. Myers said the process has helped clarify issues.

"It answers questions of ownership," he said. "Some people who were called said they didn't know they owed any taxes."

CONTROL

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maintains an airplane in La Grande that Lulay will use for aerial hunting in Grant and neighboring counties.

Lulay said he's been trapping in Grant County all winter. Most of his livestock depredation work is focused on coyotes, but he also handles complaints about cougars and bears. He also responds to calls about skunks and raccoons.

"The state Fish and Wildlife office will sometimes call me for a mountain lion sighting," he said.

Rancher's request

Jim Dovenburg played a key role in getting an animal damage control officer assigned to Grant County.

"Grant County was one of the few counties in Oregon without a Wildlife Services agent," he told the Eagle.

Dovenburg, who owns the Widows Creek Ranch east of Dayville, said 2,000 deer wintered on his ranch when the county had a Wildlife Services agent keeping predators under control, but the deer population dropped to about 100 after the program ended.

He said the Wildlife Services agent had removed about 40 coyotes a year from his 5-square-mile property. With the agent gone, Dovenburg hired a trapper for about 18 months and saw deer and antelope populations on his property triple.

"I manage my wildlife like my livestock," he said. "Coyotes are a huge problem. You need to be proactive and keep wildlife in balance."

Dovenburg said a Wildlife Services agent not only deals with ranches, he will respond to residential complaints too. He noted that ravens are a major problem, preying on newborn calves sleeping in a pasture.

"Ravens are the single biggest predator for sage grouse eggs," he said. "They're not a good bird."

After numerous attempts, the animal damage control program was brought back to Grant County in 2017, but it was too late in the fiscal year to be fully funded for the first year, Dovenburg said. He said cooperator funding will be complete in the second year, and the program will continue "as long as I remain standing."

Grant County Judge Scott Myers said the county budgeted \$35,000 for the program in the current fiscal year with the stipulation that



Nick Lulay, the new Wildlife Services agent for Grant County, at the airport in La Grande after a day of aerial predator control. notforsale

Contributed photo



A coyote attacks a sheep in this photo from the USDA National Wildlife Research Center, the research arm of Wildlife Services. notforsale

Contributed photo

other funding would become available.

"I believe the program will continue to be annually funded," he said.

Lulay said his position is supported with county and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife funding, but he expects to see state and fed-

eral funding available in the next fiscal year.

Wildlife Services

Established in 1972 under the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Wildlife Services' mission is to "resolve wildlife conflicts to allow people and wildlife to coexist," according

to the USDA website.

According to a 1998 analysis of data from USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service, \$3 worth of livestock was saved for every dollar spent on predation management. The analysis showed that \$9 million in federal funds combined with

ARRESTS

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Oregon State Police received a report of a suspicious vehicle leaving Dayville at about 8:30 a.m., and Sgt. Tom Hutchison stopped the vehicle at about 8:51 a.m. on Highway 26 in Prairie City.

"A consent search of the vehicle was conducted, and about 5 pounds of marijuana was discovered, along with \$3161.00 in cash," Hutchison said in his report.

Subsequent investigation revealed Presley, Mack and a female passenger, Margaret Elizabeth Muir, acquired the marijuana in Bend and planned to transport it to

Wyoming, Hutchison said.

Presley also faces one charge of delivery of marijuana, according to court documents, and Mack, the driver, faces one charge of giving false information to a police officer as well as traffic infractions. The exporting and conspiracy charges are felonies.

Muir, 19, Cheyenne, Wyoming,

was issued a citation and released, according to OSP records.

A third male passenger, a 21-year-old Baker City resident, was released with no action taken.

The vehicle was seized and towed. A status check is set for Presley and Mack at 1:15 p.m. Feb. 15 in Grant County Circuit Court.