

Canyon City man charged with kidnapping, assault, strangulation

By Richard Hanners
Blue Mountain Eagle

A Grant County grand jury has indicted a 38-year-old Canyon City man with 12 charges relating to an abusive relationship with a woman. Three counts are for first-degree kidnapping, which carry sentences up to 20 years in prison.

Benjamin L. Keith is

charged with kidnapping, assault, strangulation, menacing, harassment and pointing a pistol at the woman from Nov. 1, 2017, through May 1.

According to the May 17 indictment, Keith allegedly kidnapped the woman with the intent of terrorizing her in March and April. He is charged with three counts of felony assault constitut-

ing domestic violence taking place in November 2017 and in February through April.

Keith is also charged with two counts of misdemeanor strangulation constituting domestic violence taking place in November and December 2017 and in April.

He faces two counts of misdemeanor menacing constituting domestic violence taking place in November

and December 2017 and in April, and one count of misdemeanor harassment taking place in April.

The indictment also charges Keith with pointing a pistol at the woman in November or December 2017, an unclassified misdemeanor.

Keith is being held in the Grant County Jail. Bail has been set at \$500,000 for each of the kidnapping charges.

COPS AND COURTS

Arrests and citations in the Blue Mountain Eagle are taken from the logs of law enforcement agencies. Every effort is made to report the court disposition of arrest cases.

Grant County Circuit Court

Billy W. Wells, 55, Seneca, pleaded guilty April 26 to felony second-degree burglary and first-degree theft and two counts of misdemeanor second-degree theft committed at a hunting camp near Seneca on Nov. 5, 2017. He was sentenced to 20 months in prison, one year post-prison supervision and a \$50 fine. He was also ordered to pay \$800 in restitution to a victim. Three counts of burglary and two counts of theft were dismissed.

Samuel E. Valade, 20, Mt. Vernon, was acquitted June 1 of a charge of driving under the influence of intoxicants on July 15, 2017.

Grant County Sheriff

The Grant County Sheriff's Office reported the following for the week of May 30:

Concealed handgun licenses: 3

Average inmates: 19

Bookings: 7

Releases: 10

Arrests: 0

Citations: 1

Fingerprints: 3

Civil papers: 14

Warrants processed: 6

Asst./welfare check: 0

Search and rescue: 0

May 29: Nola Pierson, 55, John Day, was cited for third-degree theft.

Oregon State Police

May 23: Responded to Grant Union Junior-Senior High School for a report of

an intoxicated man hiding behind a cargo container. Israel Sanchez, 55, was arrested and charged with disorderly conduct.

May 23: Following a traffic stop on Highway 26 west of Prairie City, Aaron M. Roseberry, 31, John Day, was arrested and charged with driving while suspended or revoked and contempt of court. Roseberry was on probation, and both alcohol and marijuana were allegedly found in his vehicle.

Justice Court

Alan W. Wolfe, 30, Canyon City, pleaded guilty to criminal trespass, disorderly conduct, theft and criminal mischief committed May 17. He was sentenced to 55 days in jail, 90 hours community service, 18 months of probation and \$1,460 in fines and fees. A probation violation charge was dismissed.

Dispatch

John Day dispatch worked 144 calls during the week of May 27 to June 3, including:

• **John Day Police Department**

May 28: Dispatched to a grocery store in John Day for a check fraud report.

May 29: Responded to a report of a dispute on North McHaley Avenue in Prairie City.

May 29: Following a traffic stop at Third Street and Bridge Street in John Day, Villa P. Cejay, 22, Challis, Idaho, was cited for driving uninsured.

May 30: Responded to a drug store in John Day and cited an 83-year-old man for second-degree theft.

May 30: Dispatched to Cozart Avenue in Prairie City with Grant County Sheriff's Office and Forest Service. Thomas Busby, 46, Prairie City, was arrested on a felony warrant.

June 1: Received a report of

ATVs traveling at a high rate of speed on Overholt Avenue in Prairie City.

June 1: Responded with Oregon State Police to West Main Street in John Day. Mathew P. Walker, 34, John Day, was arrested on a felony warrant.

• **Oregon State Police**
May 28: Advised of a non-injury motor vehicle crash on Highway 395 near the Magone Lake Road junction.

May 28: Advised of a possible theft at a gas station west of John Day.

May 31: Advised of a cow on Highway 26 in Wheeler County.

June 1: With assistance from Grant County Sheriff's Office, cows reported on Highway 26 were rounded up and fenced back in.

• **Grant County Sheriff's Office**

May 28: Responded to a report of shots fired on Highway 395 south of Canyon City near Deer Creek.

May 29: Dispatched to Forest Service Road 098 for a suspicious person.

May 30: Responded to River Estates Lane in Mt. Vernon for an assault report.

May 31: Received a rape report in John Day.

June 2: Received a report of a noninjury motor vehicle accident on Highway 26 near Prairie City.

June 2: Received a report of a man wearing an animal hat and a woman in a red cape walking with a baby in Dayville.

June 2: Responded to a restaurant on Highway 26 in west John Day for a person who refused to leave.

June 2: Dispatched to South Canyon Boulevard in John Day for a report of shots fired.

June 2: Responded to Highway 19 near Kimberly for a motor vehicle crash with injury.

June 2: Dispatched to the Seventh Street Complex in

John Day for a domestic report.

June 3: Advised of possible illegal hunting on Pine Creek Road in John Day.

June 3: Advised of a possible dispute on Highway 26 in west John Day.

• **John Day ambulance**
May 27: Responded to Northwest Third Street in John Day for a 68-year-old woman.

May 27: Dispatched to East Main Street in John Day for a 65-year-old man.

May 29: Paged for a senior home in John Day for a woman with back, hip and pelvis pain.

May 29: Responded to South Johnson Avenue in Prairie City for a 74-year-old man who had fallen.

May 31: Dispatched to West Main Street in John Day for a man with a medical alarm.

June 2: Dispatched with Long Creek fire and ambulance to South Hewitt Street in Long Creek for a man who cut his fingers on a saw.

June 2: Paged to Lower Yard Road in John Day for a woman who was bucked off a horse.

June 3: Responded to West Main Street in John Day for a 62-year-old woman who had fallen.

June 3: Dispatched to Trafton Lane in John Day for an 86-year-old woman who had fallen out of bed.

• **U.S. Forest Service**
May 28: Received a report of an unattended camp fire near Austin Junction.

May 30: The Prairie City Ranger Station received a report of a missing person.

• **John Day fire**
May 30: Responded with Canyon City fire and Oregon Department of Forestry to a grass fire on Buckhorn Road in Canyon City.

• **Oregon Department of Transportation**

June 3: Advised of rocks on Highway 26 west of Mt. Vernon.



The Eagle/Richard Hanners

Grant County Judge Scott Myers, left, and Commissioner Jim Hamsher work together on a replat map during their May 23 meeting. Commissioner Boyd Britton was absent.

Court will ask legislature for courthouse roof funding

By Richard Hanners
Blue Mountain Eagle

The Grant County Court has asked the Association of Oregon Counties to represent Grant County in the Oregon Legislature for a funding request to repair the county courthouse roof.

Grant County Judge Scott Myers made the request during a recent courthouse facilities meeting with the AOC. He told the court at their May 23 meeting that the courthouse roof is leaking right above the Grant County Circuit Court offices.

Myers estimates a new roof for the courthouse could cost from \$100,000 to \$150,000. If appropriated by the legislature as requested, the state would reimburse the county for \$100,000, and the county would pay the remaining cost.

Myers noted that in the past the legislature provided about \$150,000 for an elevator in the courthouse, and the county paid about \$70,000.

Maintaining and repairing existing courthouses is more cost-effective than building new ones, he said, noting that Deschutes County is considering spending \$30 million on a new courthouse.

Commissioner Boyd Britton was absent. In other county court news:

• Thirteen of the 31 tax-foreclosed properties offered at a May 17 auction had buyers. The minimum bid was set at 50 percent of market value. One of the properties that sold was the Mt. Vernon Mobile Home & RV Park located between Highway 395 and Highlan Drive.

The county plans to advertise the rest of the properties for sale by sealed bid. Laurie Wright, the court's administrative assistant, said

the minimum bid acceptable under state law is 15 percent of market value.

• The court agreed to spend about \$2,000 installing frost-free connections at the Depot RV Park in Prairie City as a step toward upgrading the county-owned facility for use in shoulder seasons and winter.

Chris Camarena, Prairie City's public works director, explained that an electrical upgrade at the RV park will meet the higher load requirements of newer RVs. Some electrical equipment "melts down" under heavy air conditioning loads in summer, he said.

• The court agreed to add \$8,000 to the \$18,000 cost of a new county website. Wright, a member of the website committee, said CivicPlus, the Kansas-based website developer, wants to spend three days in Grant County to personally interview county staff.

The additional money will cover the company's travel and consulting costs. Wright estimated the project would take about 28 weeks to complete.

• The court approved two livestock contracts for the Northwest Professional Rodeo Association (NPROA) rodeo to be held at the Grant County Fairgrounds Aug. 10-11.

The Lazy HK Bar contract was for \$6,500, and the B Bar D Rodeo Inc. contract was for \$14,000. Commissioner Jim Hamsher noted that rodeo livestock contracts in past years have totaled \$25,000.

The court also approved a contract with Grant County Youth Livestock Auction Inc. to sponsor the 4-H/FFA livestock auction at the county fair. Hamsher noted that the Kiwanis Club sponsored the auction in the past.

Prescribed burning planned on Malheur National Forest

Blue Mountain Eagle

Crews from the Blue Mountain Ranger District on the northern half of the Malheur National Forest began approximately 100 acres of black-lining in the Galena project area, units 10 and 20, earlier this week, with antic-

ipation of completing about 2,000 acres total by aerial ignitions in the later part of the week.

Burning operations may have some short-term impacts on air quality levels to the Austin/Bates and Galena areas of Grant County. Fire personnel will work closely with the Or-

egon Department of Forestry in accordance with State Smoke Management Plans to insure that smoke impacts on the local communities are minimized.

Smoke may worsen symptoms for people who have pre-existing health conditions and those who are particularly sensitive to smoke. Those that

fall into either category should limit their exposure to the smoke:

• Limit outdoor activities, especially in the morning hours, when smoke has a tendency to settle.

• Drink plenty of water to help reduce symptoms of scratchy throat and coughing.

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In celebration of my 80th birthday this month, all fares within John Day will be .80 all month.

Thank you & God bless you.

Richie Colbeth
Owner/Operator

61007

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BISCUITS & GRAVY!

Fuel up for the 62 Days activities at the Hope 4 Paws Breakfast on June 9

When: 7am-9am

Where: Canyon City Fire Station

Menu:

Biscuits and gravy, fruit, juice and coffee.

By donation – Proceeds benefit the pet rescue, spay/neuter assistance, and other programs of Hope 4 Paws: Grant County.

Hope 4 Paws is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit dedicated to improving the lives of pets in Grant County.

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