



MONUMENTAL MOVIEMAKER

Grant County graduate earns second Oscar nomination with latest documentary 'Hunger Ward'

By Rudy Diaz
Blue Mountain Eagle

Filmmaker Skye Fitzgerald carried the lessons he learned in high school in the tiny town of Monument all the way to war-torn Yemen, the setting for his latest documentary "Hunger Ward," which is in the running for an Academy Award at Sunday's ceremony.

It's Fitzgerald's second Oscar nomination, and he said his time growing up in rural Grant County taught him the value of hard work and gave him an appreciation of "the simple things in life" when his family moved to a house 16 miles outside of Monument that lacked running water and electricity when he was in eighth grade.

"The fact that we didn't have running water or electricity made me appreciate them all the more when I went to college in La Grande at Eastern Oregon University," he said.

Fitzgerald said he knew he wanted to pursue a career where he could bring to light the challenges faced by others in the world who lack fundamental resources such as running

water, electricity or access to health care.

"In some small sense, I experienced some of that lack myself, and I wanted to make sure that whatever I devoted my career to, there's an attempt to use my career for good to get change," Fitzgerald said.

His 2018 film "Lifeboat," which was also nominated for an Oscar, followed search and rescue operations off the coast of Libya.

"Hunger Ward," competing in this year's short documentary category, focuses on two therapeutic feeding centers in Yemen for children suffering from malnutrition. He said the Oscar nomination gives the documentary another chance to raise awareness about the conflict.

"It's important that I use my own tools as a filmmaker to try to intervene and bring the issue to the largest audience possible to alter this unfolding tragedy that doesn't need to occur because of this



Contributed photo
Monument graduate Skye Fitzgerald directed the Academy Award-nominated film 'Hunger Ward.'

See *Moviemaker*, Page A18



Skye Fitzgerald filming a search and rescue operation in the Southern Mediterranean.

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Cattle mutilations perplex investigators

Six more mutilated cows found in rural Crook County

By Garrett Andrews
EO Media Group

The udders appeared to have been removed with precision — straight, even cuts, as if made by a sharp object.

The reproductive systems had been cut out cleanly as well, and without disturbing other organs.

There was no indication of predator activity, and perhaps strangest of all, scavenging animals appeared to have hardly touched these six cow carcasses found in a seven-day span this year on ranchland in rural Crook County.

Detectives with the Crook County Sheriff's Office, longtime partner and a Prineville veterinarian who reviewed evidence from an ongoing case say they're stumped by the "unnatural" deaths.

But the mutilated cattle might be more ordinary than they seem, according to Brian Dunning, a Bend-based podcaster committed to deflating wild claims.

"This reads like a very typical case," he said.

Crook County Sheriff John Gaut-



A cow was found dead and mutilated in early 2020 at Bar DR Land and Cattle, a Deschutes County ranch in Hampton.

Contributed photo/Clancy Roth

ney said his office has no leads but cautioned there's "no reason to panic."

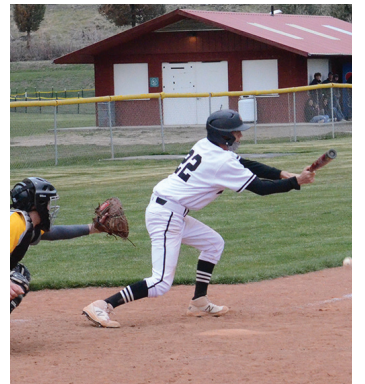
"We've had cases like this over the years," Gautney said. "They seem to come in groups and then go away. We are not speculating on how these are happening, as we try to keep an open mind and look at all possibilities."

Mutilated cattle have been reported in the American West since at least the 1960s. There have been multiple recent cases of bull mutilations in Harney, Wheeler and Umatilla counties

in Eastern Oregon. But now, beef cattle have turned up dead in the remote ranchlands outside Prineville bearing signs common to the cattle mutilation phenomenon.

The current string of cases began Feb. 27, when Crook County Sheriff's Office Deputy Scott Durr was dispatched to suspicious circumstances at the 96 Ranch on Southeast Van Lake Road. Owner Rickey Shannon said

See *Mutilations*, Page A18



The Eagle/Rudy Diaz
Kobe Fell bunts the ball on April 14 in the first game of the season against the Baker/Powder Valley Bulldogs. Other scheduled sports events are on hold after an uptick in COVID-19 cases.

Grant Union, Humbolt Elementary close for COVID-19

Seneca remains open, but sports contests are canceled this week

By Rudy Diaz
Blue Mountain Eagle

Grant Union Junior/Senior High School and Humbolt Elementary transitioned to distance learning on April 19 because of an uptick in COVID-19 cases.

Grant School District 3 Superintendent Bret Uptmor said they are targeting April 26 as a return date for in-class sessions, but this is contingent on the district's evaluation of the COVID-19 situation on April 22 to see if the date would need to be extended.

Grant Union Junior/Senior High School sporting events are also canceled this week.

Uptmor told the Eagle April 16 that Seneca will remain open for in-class lessons.

"During the time of distance learning, the district along with the health department will monitor cases for community spread," Uptmor said in the release. "Opening our schools for onsite instruction will be announced as it is determined safe for our students and staff to return. Grant Union Jr./Sr. High School and Humbolt have prepared for the delivery of instruction remotely."

On April 13, Uptmor said 44% of students at Grant Union Junior/Senior High School and 16% of students at Humbolt Elementary were on quarantine.

The Grant County Health Department began considering the two-week pause for the district with the percentage of students on quarantine.

"We have a great appreciation for parents and their willingness to work with us and getting students the material they need at home through this process again," Uptmor said.

The school district will continue providing breakfast and lunch Mondays through Thursdays. The program is for all children 18 years old and younger in the community.

The school will prepare meals based on last November's student counts. If somebody did not participate last fall, call and leave a message at 541-575-1799 to participate in the food service program.

The breakfasts and lunches will be available for pickup from 9-9:30 a.m. at Humbolt Elementary, the Seventh Street Complex by the pond, the bowling alley parking lot and the Mt. Vernon Park.

"We appreciate your understanding and patience through this change," Uptmor said. "The process of taking in and making safe decisions will continue, and our school will get back to onsite quickly and only with safety in mind."

No other school districts in Grant County announced closures as of April 19.