



Steven Mitchell/Blue Mountain Eagle

Volunteers at John Day's Squeeze-In Restaurant and Deck on Christmas Day.

# Christmas at the Squeeze

John Day restaurant makes 400 free holiday dinners

By STEVEN MITCHELL  
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — A John Day restaurant teamed up with a local business owner and more than two dozen volunteers to feed nearly 400 people on Christmas Day.

The Squeeze-In Restaurant and Deck prepared free holiday meals for pickup and delivery for the second year in a row. The menu featured turkey, ham, stuffing and all the trimmings of a traditional

Christmas dinner, including pumpkin pie for dessert.

Shawn Duncan, the owner of the restaurant, said the dinners were made possible by Russ and Tara Young, who donated the funds to pay for the food costs. Russ Young is the owner of Iron Triangle, a John Day-based logging company.

"I would not have been able to do this without them," Duncan said. Duncan said she could not say how much the Youngs donated to pay for the food. This was the second year the John Day couple covered the cost of the meals.

According to Duncan, the volunteers delivered more than 200 meals

to John Day, Seneca, Prairie City and Dayville. She said they made the most deliveries to Prairie City.

Patty Ross, a volunteer, said many people in Grant County are single or without family and ultimately end up spending the holidays alone.

"It's important to make sure everybody gets that feeling that people care," Ross said. "It warms my heart to do it."

By offering the meals via pickup or delivery, Duncan said, people get a chance to visit and connect with others on Christmas.

"A lot of people don't have anywhere to go," Duncan said. "I don't like people being alone."

## Local bird count tallies 66 species

By BENNETT HALL  
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — One of the joys of birdwatching is you never know what you're going to see when you head out with your binoculars and field guide.

This year's John Day Christmas bird count, which has been conducted each December since 1981 by the John Day Bird Club, included two first-time sightings: a ferruginous hawk and a Swainson's thrush. Other rarities included Harris' sparrow, last spotted during the local Christmas count in 2006, and the first Lincoln's sparrow since 2013.

The local count, part of a data-gathering effort sponsored by the Audubon Society since 1900, attempts to record all the bird species and total number of each seen on a single day in a roughly circular area centered on the stoplight in John Day.

According to Tom Winters, the bird club's president, a dozen volunteers took part in this year's count on Dec. 18, spending a combined 37 hours in the field, traveling 5 miles on foot and 208 miles by car, and spotting 66 species.

No clear trends were discerned in this year's Christmas

bird count other than indications that climate change may be causing some birds to alter their ranges, Winters said.

"We have seen some species moving in that didn't use to be here," he noted, citing the California scrub jay and lesser goldfinch as examples.

Among his favorite sightings this year was a small group of bushtits.

"They always move in groups," Winters said. "They're really tiny little grayish birds, but they're cute."

He was also excited to have spied an adult golden eagle perched high on the rimrock above the John Day Valley and an American dipper on the riverbank near the John Day sewage ponds.

The most common species sighted this year was the dark-eyed junco, with 630 individuals counted, followed by the California quail (492 individuals), house sparrow (342), Canada goose (338), European starling (333), pine siskin (193), Eurasian collared dove (169) and common raven (149).

At the other end of the spectrum, birders spotted just a single example of these species: Wilson's snipe, ferruginous hawk, barn owl, Pacific wren, Swainson's thrush, Harris' sparrow, Lincoln's sparrow and spotted towhee.

## OBITUARIES

### Patsy Eileen Brooks

April 20, 1948 — Dec. 10, 2021

Patsy Eileen Brooks, 73, of Rosalia, Washington, passed away on Dec. 10 following a long battle with kidney failure. Patsy was born April 20, 1948, in Prairie City to John and Madeline Hutchison of Austin. She graduated from Prairie City High School in 1966.

Patsy was preceded in death by both parents, husband Raymond Brooks, and brother Parley (Leonard) Hutchison. She is survived by sisters Hazel Berdahl and Linda Hanks, brothers Robert Hutchison and Kenneth Hutchison, children Neil Brooks (Heidi), Dawn Hart (Jen), Tia Barrieta (Joe), eight grandchildren, and 15 great-grandchildren.

Prior to health complications, Patsy was full of life. She enjoyed hunting and camping with her family. She was an avid crafter and spent many hours creating craft items to give her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Patsy was a loving wife, sister, mother, and grandmother. Her kind spirit and generous nature will be missed by all that knew her.

She will be laid to rest next to Raymond at the Washington State Veterans Cemetery in Medical Lake, Washington. Bruning Funeral Home of Colfax, Washington, is caring for the family. Online condolences may be sent to [bruningfuneralhome.com](http://bruningfuneralhome.com).



### Diane Lee Tirico

July 8, 1937 — Dec. 13, 2021

Diane Lee Tirico, age 84, passed away Dec. 13 in Bend, with her family by her side. A Mass of Christian Burial was held Tuesday, Dec. 21, at St. Elizabeth of Hungary Catholic Church in John Day.

On Dec. 13, our Lord accepted another kind and loyal soul to the Kingdom of God.

Diane was born July 8, 1937, in Orange, California, to Joseph and Genevieve Rhines Hamann. She enjoyed being a big sister to her three younger siblings, Jeanine, Charmine, and Richard. She also has a brother, David, who was closer to her age.

Diane was a wife for over 60 years to her husband, Anthony Tirico. Together they raised three sons, Anthony Jr., Joseph, and Richard. They also have a daughter, Lisa, who remained very close to her mother throughout her life.

Diane graduated from St. Vincent's College of Nursing in Los Angeles and worked for the Children's Hospital of Los Angeles County. She worked for many years in various hospitals, when she and Tony decided to move to Mt. Vernon, Oregon, and buy a ranch.

After raising the older children, Diane decided to go back to work as an office nurse for Dr. Spalding. This started many years at the Blue Mountain Hospital, where she enjoyed the camaraderie of close friends.

Throughout her life, she handled problems with joy, strength, and dignity. She provided wisdom and courage to those she mentored throughout her long nursing career.

She is preceded in death by her grandsons Tony and Eric and daughter-in-law Luann. She has now found them again in heaven.

Diane is also survived by her grandchildren, great-grandchildren, son-in-law Greg Roberts and daughter-in-law Cindy Tirico.

To leave an online condolence for the family, visit [www.driskillmemorialchapel.com](http://www.driskillmemorialchapel.com).



### Nancy Kay Swaggart

Jan. 5, 1941 — Dec. 17, 2021

Nancy Kay Swaggart of Hermiston was born on Jan. 5, 1941, in Missouri to Earl and Irene Garrison Bonner. She died on Dec. 17 in Kennewick, Washington, at the age of 80. She was raised in Eastern Oregon and graduated from Long Creek High School in Long Creek. Nancy was united in marriage to Cecil Swaggart on June 24, 1957, in Pendleton. They lived in Ritter and worked together in the family logging and construction business until retiring. They moved to Hermiston in 2006, where they have lived since. Nancy was a member of Our Lady of Angels Catholic Church in Hermiston and the John Day Elks Lodge. She enjoyed music, church, flowers and traveling. Nancy cherished spending time with her family.

She is survived by her husband of 64 years, Cecil Swaggart, Hermiston; sons Benjamin Swaggart and wife Terri, Hermiston, Lincoln Swaggart and wife Julie, Eagle, Idaho, John Swaggart and wife Misty, Echo, and Paul Blake Swaggart, Wickenburg, Arizona; 12 grandchildren, Levi, Garrett, Logan, Ty, Chase, Jon Merle, J. Blake, Alyssa, Alaura, Shiyenne, Sydney and Taylor; a great-grandson, Lonnie; a great-granddaughter, Laine; and numerous nieces, nephews and cousins.

Nancy was preceded in death by her parents, her brother Carl and her sister Joyce.

Recitation of the Holy Rosary was held on Wednesday, Dec. 22, at 10 a.m., followed by Mass of Christian Burial at 10:30 a.m. at Our Lady of Angels Catholic Church in Hermiston.

Burial was held on Thursday, Dec. 23, at 11 a.m. at Ritter Cemetery in Ritter.

Those who wish may make contributions in Nancy's memory to Our Lady of Angels Catholic Church, Hermiston.

Please share memories of Nancy with her family at [bumsmortuary-hermiston.com](http://bumsmortuary-hermiston.com).

Burns Mortuary of Hermiston is in charge of arrangements.



**The Blue Mountain Eagle office will be Closed Friday, December 31<sup>st</sup>**

**Happy Holidays!**

**Blue Mountain EAGLE**

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[www.MyEagleNews.com](http://www.MyEagleNews.com)

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## Mt. Vernon looks to fill empty council position

Blue Mountain Eagle

MT. VERNON — The city of Mt. Vernon is looking for volunteers interested in fill-

ing a vacant seat on the City Council.

Qualified applicants must be at least 18 years old, registered to vote and Mt. Vernon

residents who have lived in the city for at least a year.

The appointee will serve a term running through Dec. 31, 2022. Applications are due by

4 p.m. Feb. 7.

Application forms are available at City Hall, 290 W. Main St., from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday-Friday.

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★ Dec. 31 - Jan. 6 ★

**SPIDER-MAN NO WAY HOME** (PG-13)  
Fri-Sun 12:45, 4:00, 7:10  
Mon-Thurs 7:10

**SING 2** (PG)  
Fri-Sun 1:20, 4:20, 7:20  
Mon-Thurs 7:20

**THE MATRIX RESURRECTIONS** (R)  
Fri-Sun 1:00, 4:10, 7:30  
Mon-Thurs 7:00

\*\*SHOWTIMES SUBJECT TO CHANGE. VISIT OUR WEBSITE OR CALL AHEAD TO VERIFY\*\*

[www.eltrym.com](http://www.eltrym.com) (541) 523-2522

**CORRECTION**

**Gleason Park:** The state has agreed to pay the city of John Day \$222,000 for the Gleason Park and Gleason Pool property. A story on Page A1 of the Dec. 22 edition misstated the amount. The Eagle regrets the error.

We want to thank everyone who took tags and donated food for the Prairie City Fire Department Christmas Basket Program. A special thank you to the people behind the scenes.

Prairie City School	Tonya Wood	Debbie Sanowski
Lauren Wenger	Carlos Bortell	Pam Gangler
Chris Camarena	Andy Hutsell	Tom Gangler
Carla Wright	Laura Hire	Verna Clark
Sharon Thissell	Cynthia Jackson	Luella Simrell
Lyn McDonald	Marvin Rynerson	Brogan Cearns
Georgia Patterson	KJDY	

**WE WISH EVERYONE A VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR**

5275383-1

**Last Week's Temps**

John Day	HI/LO
Wednesday .....	42/34
Thursday .....	37/29
Friday .....	36/28
Saturday .....	32/24
Sunday .....	27/23
Monday .....	30/23
Tuesday .....	28/20

**24/7 FORECAST**

AUTOMATED: 541-575-1122

ROAD CONDITIONS: 511; TRIPCHECK.COM

NOAA WEATHER RADIO FOR JOHN DAY  
162.500 MHZ

**WEATHER FORECAST FOR THE WEEK OF DEC. 29-JAN. 4**

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
Snow showers	Snow showers	AM snow showers	Partly cloudy	Mostly cloudy	Mostly cloudy	Mostly cloudy
<b>26</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>28</b>