

LOCAL BRIEFING

Painted Sky program gets grant

JOHN DAY — The Juniper Arts Council has received a \$4,085 grant from the Oregon Arts Commission, the state agency announced. The nonprofit will use the money to support the Painted Sky Center for the Arts' World Tour Summer 2022, a program that includes arts-focused summer camps and free community events that celebrate different cultures from around the globe. The funds will be used to pay for art supplies, provide arts instruction and cover other event-related costs.

Fire prevention effort gets funding

JOHN DAY — The Grant County Soil and Water Conservation District has been selected to receive state funding for a large-scale project to reduce wildfire fuels on forest and rangeland. The Upper John Day Valley Landscape Resiliency Project was one of nine projects around the state chosen to receive a share of \$20 million in state grant money to treat 156,000 acres at risk of catastrophic wildfire. The projects will also bring in more than \$15 million in matching funds from federal, state, private and in-kind investments. The Grant County Soil and Water Conservation District is proposing to treat 30,000 acres east of John Day. The district had requested a \$2.3 million state grant tied to \$1.8 million in matching funds.

Comment opens on burn rule

SALEM — The Oregon Department of Forestry is seeking public comment on a proposed change to rules governing prescribed burns in the state. The change is intended to clarify an existing rule, the department said in a news release. The amended rules clarify that a person may conduct a prescribed burn across land ownership boundaries if the person obtains the proper permit. The amendment also clarifies that a person may obtain a permit if they demonstrate to the department that they have obtained permission from everyone whose lands would be affected by the proposed burn. Written comments must be received by 5 p.m. Wednesday, March 2, and should be addressed to Tim Holschbach, deputy chief of policy and planning for the department's Protection from Fire Division. Comments may be emailed to sb762.rulemaking@odf.oregon.gov or mailed to Oregon Department of Forestry, Attn: Tim Holschbach, 2600 State St., Bldg. D, Salem, OR 97310. Detailed information on the rulemaking effort can be found online at <https://tinyurl.com/3yv4xhhd>.

Blue Mountain Eagle

Mt. Vernon man arrested in connection with stolen vehicle

By STEVEN MITCHELL
Blue Mountain Eagle

DAYVILLE — Grant County Sheriff's Office and Oregon State Police personnel arrested an armed Mt. Vernon man in the early morning hours of Tuesday, Feb. 15, who was allegedly in possession of a stolen vehicle. Daniel Antonio Lopez, 34, of Mt. Vernon was identified as the driver of a car reported to have been stolen the previous day in Deschutes County, according to a Tuesday, Feb. 15, press release from the Grant County Sheriff's Office.

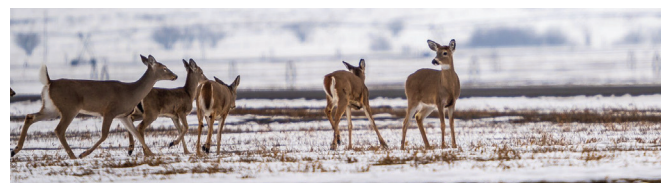
Grant County Sheriff Todd McKinley said residents in Dayville reported a 2007 Toyota Rav4 had broken down and left in the Dayville Mini Mart parking lot. McKinley said Lopez was initially uncooperative when asked for his identification and, when arrested, was found to have been carrying a concealed handgun. According to the Grant County Jail inmate roster, Lopez was booked on charges of possessing a stolen vehicle and felony possession of a concealed weapon without a permit.

Online forum slated on grad requirements

Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — Grant County residents will have a chance to weigh in on state high school graduation requirements during an online listening session next week. The virtual meeting will take place from 6 to 8 p.m. Wednesday, March 2, over Zoom. Last year, the Legislature directed the Oregon Department of Education to review state requirements to graduate from high school. As part of that review, the department

is working to determine what matters most to people in Oregon about earning a high school diploma. ODE is working with Oregon's Kitchen Table, a program of Portland State University, to gather input from people around the state through a series of online community conversations. To participate in the Grant County listening session, register online at <https://tinyurl.com/2mcsj9hm>. If you need interpretation services, send an email to info@oregonskitchentable.org.



Alex Wittwer/EO Media Group, File
A group of young deer make their way across a field in Summerville on Monday, Jan. 17.

'Deervid' non-issue in Oregon so far

By ALEX WITTWER
EO Media Group

LA GRANDE — The presence of COVID-19 among the white-tailed deer population in Oregon isn't known, according to officials with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and it's unlikely to be a concern. Reports of infections running rampant in the Midwest's white-tailed deer population spurred numerous news outlets to pen articles trumpeting the dangers of a COVID-19 reservoir in the wildlife population. The presence of COVID-19 in deer has been detected in 15 states, including Iowa, Michigan, Illinois and New York, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Oregon officials aren't too concerned, however, and said the probability of infection among the hoofed ruminant population was low, and lower still was the chance the deer could reinfect humans. "It's a low probability," said Colin Gillin, state wildlife veterinarian for ODFW. "It's not been shown that it's a threat to Oregonians." Gillin said that due to the relatively low population of white-tailed deer in Oregon, as well as the lack of petting zoos, research facilities or farms, meant that the risk of human-to-deer contact is remote. In fact, most interactions between Oregonians and white-tailed deer generally involve firearms. If there's a concern among hunters, Gillin said, proper sanitation, vaccinations and mask wearing can mitigate the risk of exposure of COVID-19 to the wildlife population in Oregon, and to hunters. The veterinarian also noted that, in the case of a disease such as COVID-19, the virus would change due to absorbing DNA from the host. "When a virus goes into a

new host or a new species, it takes on some of the genetic material of that species or host and it changes the virus a bit," Gillin said. Gillin also said that there's "not a lot of evidence at this point that it easily goes into other species of deer like black-tail deer, mule deer or elk." "It may," he said, "but so far there's been no evidence that it causes disease in the deer, and there's no documented evidence that it comes back out of the deer so it's acting like a zoonotic disease." Deer aren't the only animals to have been known to suffer COVID-19 infections. Early in the pandemic, mink farms suffered tremendous losses as farms across the world culled their minks due to the virus running rampant. Denmark culled nearly 17 million minks in November 2020 after it was found the virus had been transmitted to minks, mutated and was transmitted back to the human handlers, according to reports from NBC news. But whether or not the virus will be seen in Oregon's deer population remains a mystery. Officials with ODFW aren't actively testing or researching the virus in Oregon herds. But it's also unlikely infected deer from the Midwest would end up in Eastern Oregon, given that the longest recorded migration path of a white-tailed deer is less than 400 miles. Still, Gillin said the state is keeping close watch on any new developments regarding COVID-19 in the wildlife population. "There's quite a few really good researchers out there working on this in the Midwest. They're putting a lot of resources into it, and we're in contact with those individuals," Gillin said. "We have our ear to ground on the topic, but we're not engaged in active research in Oregon because of the low risk."

Alberto (Al) Pablo Nicholas Sillonis
March 1, 1936 ~ January 17, 2022

Alberto (Al) Pablo Nicholas Sillonis was last seen fishing at the dock on the Snake River below Hells Canyon Visitor's Center around 2 PM on January 17, 2022. When he failed to return home, the search found his hat and a fishing pole with line still in the water. While some family and friends were quick to speculate that he was in the witness protection program, had been abducted by aliens, or kidnapped by a femme fatale, the prime suspect was identified as the river. Somehow, he fell in and did not survive.

Al was born March 1, 1936, in Boise, Idaho to Juan Agustin and Juana Zarandona Sillonis, Basque immigrants from Ispaster, Spain. He grew up and went to school in the Big Bend area of Adrian, Oregon. Al was drafted into the Army in 1959 and served in Korea. He was recalled during the Berlin Crisis in 1961 and served with an activated National Guard Unit at Fort Lewis, Washington. Between the Army and the US Forest Service, Al spent almost 38 years in government service. A gypsy at heart, Al, by his choice, moved a lot while working for the Forest Service. On June 5, 1971, Al and Jeannette Miles were married in Burns, Oregon. Daughter Diana was born in Orofino, Idaho in 1974, followed by daughter Tresa in Kalispell, Montana in 1976.

Al enjoyed photography, hunting, skiing, camping, traveling, picking huckleberries, and bowling among other things. He was an ardent supporter of high school athletics. Al was a friend to many and a stranger to none, because he talked to everyone who crossed his path, regardless of whether they wanted to or not. He was the author of the coveted Grumpy Al's I Hate Onions Cookbook. There is the possibility that his distaste for onions had become more habit than anything



else. When Jeanette pointed out that a food item in their house contained onions, Al simply requested "Don't tell anyone" and ate it anyway. Al was an angler and had quite the collection of jokey fishing t-shirts. Moving to Weiser, Idaho in 2003 allowed them to be closer (but not too close) to family, and provided a plethora of fishing opportunities, as well, to his dismay, a pungent odor of onions from time to time. He joined the Indian Head Fly Fishing club and made great friends. Starting in 2007, he recorded every day he fished and every fish he caught and started including the fishing report in the Christmas letter. For those family and friends lucky enough to receive those Christmas letters, the annual fishing report had become a thing of legend. Since Al is not with us, the 2022 fishing report will be brief. On January 17, the river made the catch of a lifetime. Al will be dearly missed by his wife of 50 years, Jeanette, daughters Diana and Tresa, sister Cecilia Lodzinski, brother Mateo (Mike) Sillonis, extended family members, and friends. He was preceded in death by his parents, brother Pedro (Pete) Sillonis, sister Carmen Eiguren, and infant brothers Carlos and Martin. A Celebration of Life will be held at a later date. For those that may wish to make a gesture of remembrance, the family requests that you support your local high school booster club or athletic teams. Paid for by the family of Al Sillonis.

5282476-1

Ralph Palmer

November 11, 1946 ~ December 21, 2021

Ralph Palmer, age 75 of John Day, Oregon, passed away December 21, 2021 in Beaverton, Oregon after a heart attack in November 2021.

Ralph Edward Palmer was born on November 11, 1946 in Hood River, Oregon, to Kenneth Allen and Clara Mae Berry Palmer, both deceased. Ralph graduated from Kamiakin High School, Washington, in the Spring of 1963. Ralph was vice-president of his senior class, a member of the National Honor Society, and participated and lettered in the athletic programs of football (wingback two years) and track (sprint relays and 440 yard dash).

He served in the U.S. Navy. He is survived by one son, two sisters, Wanda Rose McFarlane, Barbara Creech (James) and one brother Kenneth Allen Palmer. He has many cousins living in the Northwest. In later years Ralph began renting an apartment in John Day Oregon (2002). He did yard work and maintenance on the apartment complex until his heart attack. He was meticulous in his work and cared for everything as if it were his own. Ralph was a quiet, private person and kept his word.

He lived by this scripture, Proverbs 3:5-6. *Trust in the Lord with all your heart; and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.* Proverbs 3:5-6

He was a simple man with a simple Faith. He lived a quiet, private life. Enjoy your home in Heaven, Ralph. Ralph will be interred at the Willamette National Cemetery, Portland, Oregon. Paid for by the friends of Ralph Palmer.

5282484-1

Last Week's Temps

John Day	HI/LO
Wednesday	45/24
Thursday.....	52/28
Friday	55/28
Saturday	53/32
Sunday.....	38/28
Monday.....	35/15
Tuesday	22/4

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 FEB. 23-MARCH 1

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
Partly cloudy	Cloudy	Sunny	Mostly sunny	Mostly cloudy	Partly cloudy	Mostly cloudy
26	29	39	45	47	50	55
12	8	12	23	26	31	33