

# Chamber adds electronic sign

By STEVEN MITCHELL  
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — The Grant County Chamber of Commerce installed a new readerboard last month in front of its office at 301 W. Main St. in John Day.

The chamber's manager, Tammy Bremner, said the electronic sign was two years in the making.

A couple of years ago, at a chamber board meeting, Bremner said, board member Taci Philbrook noted the Chamber of Commerce needed a new sign. The old sign, she said, was not grabbing people's attention.

The other members, according to Bremner, asked her what kind of sign she had in mind.



A crane operator with Carlson Signs out of Bend installs a sign at the Grant County Chamber of Commerce in John Day on April, 27, 2022.

Steven Mitchell/Blue Mountain Eagle

So, according to Bremner, Philbrook did some research and came back to the board with design options, a company that could install the readerboard and the cost.

Looking at a price tag of \$28,000 for the project, the

chamber budgeted for the sign for two years.

Another reason the chamber decided to put in the electronic sign was to promote local events.

Bremner noted that the chamber had recently invested

in a new website, which has a calendar. However, she said, it is difficult to get groups to tell the chamber when they are having an event.

The readerboard, she said, is an excellent way to help advertise things that are going on in Grant County. Also, Bremner added, the readerboard is another way to tell people they are the county's chamber and where people can drop by for tourist information.

The readerboard was put in by Carlson Signs out of Bend. Installing the sign entailed bringing in an excavator, which allowed the board to use a local contractor, Tidewater Construction. Bremner said the Chamber of Commerce board looks for "good, positive ways to spend money."

# Walking for a cause

Man walking cross-country hopes to start camp for homeless vets

By JUSTIN DAVIS  
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — Thirty-four-year-old Afghanistan veteran Jake Sansing has walked across America four times. Now taking his fifth trip across the country, Sansing says this will be his last.

"This time I will wind up collecting all the states except Hawaii," Sansing told the Eagle on Thursday, May 12, during a stopover in John Day.

He got to town by walking along the shoulder of Highway 26, pushing a small cart with his personal belongings and a sign that reads "Jake walks America."

The idea to walk across the country started in September 2013 following Sansing's separation from the Army and subsequent homelessness.

"I started walking in between towns to look for work. I realized walking was helping my (post-traumatic stress disorder), so I decided to walk across America just to see what it would do for me."

Sansing says he got addicted to walking during his first cross-country trek and started walking for various charities, with supporters donating a certain amount of money per mile. The first charity Sansing walked for was Shot at Life, a group that provides vaccines for children in developing countries.

After Shot at Life, Sansing walked for the Wounded Warrior Project and St. Jude's Children's Hospital. Sansing estimates he raised around \$20,000 for each of the charities he's walked for over the years.

"That just kind of gave me a sense of purpose," he said. "I woke up every day like it was my job. I wasn't getting paid for it, but it was making a difference. I was just walking, that's all I had to do."

The routes Sansing takes on his travels are largely unplanned.

"I never had any long-term plans," he said. "It

seemed pretty useless to plan anything for too long because something would always come up. I usually tried to follow the best weather and shortest distance between water sources."

Sansing doesn't have a full account of how many miles he's walked in his five trips across America.

"I calculated 10,000 miles the first three years I did it, which is why that's in the title of my book," he said.

These days Sansing promotes the book, titled "Walking America: A 10,000 Mile Guide to Self Healing," during his travels across the country.

"I had the idea to sell my book and save the money and get some land somewhere, but I wasn't able to reach enough people," Sansing said. Since he started self-promoting, he's sold around 400 copies.

That is ultimately the reason Sansing stopped in John Day. When Sansing travels, he ships his books around 100 miles ahead of him, which he describes as a four- or five-day walk. He then picks up the shipment of books and either sells them in town or signs them and ships them to anybody who has placed an order on his website during his travels from one city to the next.

The final stop for Sansing is going to be back in Oregon. Wanting to settle "somewhere between Newport and Sweet Home," Sansing says he plans on opening a campground for homeless veterans with the money from his book sales.

"Oregon has been my favorite state," he said. "That's why I want to settle here and why I want the campground here."

Sansing says he doesn't think he'll get the itch to walk across America again after his fifth trip concludes. "I'm ready to settle down and move on to something else."

Still, he plans to keep his options open.

"I might find someone else to run the campground in a few years and maybe go walk another country," he said.

"I've already walked across America. Maybe go over to Africa or something. "Jake Walks with Lions" or something like that."

# Marine Medal of Honor recipient, 84, dies in Bend

By GARRETT ANDREWS  
The Bulletin

BEND — A Vietnam vet and Medal of Honor recipient who lived his last days in Bend died last week.

Retired Marine Sgt. Maj. John Lee Canley was 84.

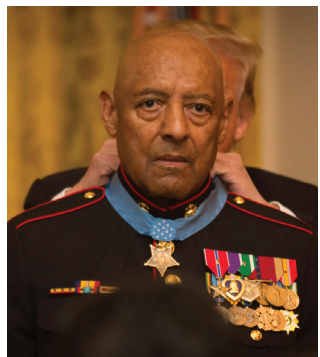
Canley received the Medal of Honor in 2018 for his actions 50 years earlier in the Tet Offensive in the Vietnam War, and 13 years after supporters started working to recognize his heroism and bravery. Of the 3,511 recipients, he was the 298th Marine and the first living Black man to receive the medal, the nation's highest military honor.

Canley died peacefully Wednesday, May 11, surrounded by family at the home of his daughter, Patricia Sargent, following a 20-year fight with prostate cancer, relatives told The Bulletin.

His death came three years to the day after the death of longtime Bend resident and Medal of Honor recipient Robert Dale Maxwell, then the oldest living recipient.

Canley lived in Oxnard, California, but regularly visited Central Oregon starting in 2004, when Sargent moved to Deschutes County. His ex-wife, Viktoria Fenech, and two stepsons also live in the county.

A lifelong fitness buff, Canley enjoyed running in his daughter's former neighbor-



Marine Cpl. Daisha Johnson  
Submitted Photo

President Donald J. Trump places the Medal of Honor around the neck of retired U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Maj. John L. Canley at the White House on Oct. 17, 2018.

hood of Eagle Crest in Redmond, and taking in the scenery at Smith Rock.

"He always talked about how beautiful it was here," Sargent said. "He loved to sit out on the patio. He always talked about the big sky, and how beautiful and blue it was."

But the longtime Southern Californian didn't care for the cold and rarely traveled here in winter, Sargent said.

Canley was in fact born in Caledonia, Arkansas, in 1937. At 15, he joined the Marine Corps using documentation belonging to his older brother.

Canley's daughter said he "grew up" in the Marines.

He was 30 when he was deployed to Vietnam in January 1968 as a company gunnery sergeant, leading many

men around a decade younger than him. The Tet Offensive, a nationwide series of simultaneous attacks by the North Vietnamese, had just begun.

According to Canley's Medal of Honor citation, from Jan. 31 to Feb. 6, 1968, he fought off multiple attacks as his unit rapidly moved along a highway toward Hue City to relieve friendly forces that were surrounded. Despite being wounded, he repeatedly rushed across fire-swept terrain to carry his wounded Marines to safety.

Canley took command after his commanding officer was severely wounded, and led his company into Hue City. For three days, he led attacks against multiple, fortified enemy positions while again braving enemy fire to carry wounded Marines to safety.

"By his undaunted courage, selfless sacrifice, and unwavering devotion to duty, Gunner Sergeant Canley reflected great credit upon himself and upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service," his citation reads.

Canley was described as quiet and not one to brag or tout his many military decorations.

"The number one thing with him is, he cared about his troops," said Canley's stepson, David Fenech. "He was a Marine's Marine." Sargent said her father was just that way.

"He didn't advertise that he

was a Medal of Honor recipient," Sargent said. "My dad was not a showboat kind of leader. That's not who he was."

Though he was a reserved presence, relatives attest to Canley regularly visiting hospitals, schools and military sites, even on his visits to Central Oregon. He attended his granddaughter's graduation from Redmond Proficiency Academy. He even appeared in Redmond's 2019 Fourth of July parade, riding on a float for his daughter's employer, Consumer Cellular.

The last time he visited was December, after it was learned his prostate cancer had spread to his bones. It would be the first winter he'd spend here.

Canley will be buried at Arlington National Cemetery. A ceremony to commission a U.S. Navy ship named in his honor, the USS John Canley, is scheduled for next month.

He was unable to attend an earlier ceremony to weld his name to the ship's keel, though he sent a speech to be read aloud.

Canley's presence in Bend was not known to the larger veterans community, according to Dick Tobiason, a recipient of the Purple Heart and veteran of the Tet Offensive.

Tobiason, who has worked to recognize Medal of Honor recipients, said he was surprised this week to learn there had been another recipient living in Bend.

## WHAT'S HAPPENING

**FRIDAY, MAY 20**  
**'62 Days planning meeting**

• 7 p.m., Sel's Brewery, 113 Washington St., Canyon City

Regular weekly meeting of the Whiskey Gulch Gang to plan this year's '62 Days festivities. Anyone who wants to help is welcome. For more information, call Colby Farrell at 541-620-0874.

**FRIDAY & SATURDAY, MAY 20 & 21**

**20th annual Grant County Quilt Show**

• 9 a.m., Trowbridge Pavilion, Grant County Fairgrounds, 411 NW Bridge St., John Day



The Grant County Piece-makers Quilting Guild presents its 20th annual show, featuring 150 quilts by Grant County residents as well as an art show by the Juniper Arts Council, vendors, food, door prizes and demonstrations. Admission is \$7 for both days. Doors open at 9 a.m. and the show goes until 6 p.m. on Friday and 4 p.m. Saturday. Quilts can be dropped off at the pavilion between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m. on Thursday, May

19. There is no charge to enter a quilt. People's Choice Awards will be given out for each day of the show. For more information, call Karen Hinton at 541-620-0120.

**SUNDAY, MAY 22**

**Quilting workshop**

• 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Trowbridge Pavilion, Grant County Fairgrounds, 411 NW Bridge St., John Day

The Grant County Piece-makers Quilting Guild will present a workshop by master quilter and teacher Sharon Holliday Mitchell. The featured pattern will be "Knot Today" by It's Sew Emma. Registration costs \$25. To register, contact Karen Hinton at

541-620-0120.

**Ghost Town Blues Band**

• 6 p.m., Diamond Hitch Mule Ranch, Highway 19, Kimberly

The award-winning blues band, whose new album, "Shine," debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard Blues Chart, will play a concert at the Diamond Hitch Mule Ranch. Street tacos from Guyon Springs will be available for purchase. Patrons are advised to bring their own chairs and drinks. Admission

is \$20 at the gate, and camping is available for a \$15 fee. For more information, call 541-934-2140.

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 25**

**"Understanding Loved Ones with Dementia"**

• 10 a.m., first floor conference room, Blue Mountain Hospital, 170 Ford Road, John Day

Dr. Robyn Jennings, a family physician at Strawberry Wilderness Community Clinic, and Rod Harwood,

older adult behavioral health coordinator at Greater Oregon Behavioral Health Inc., will lead this free 90-minute class. They will present information about dementia, provide training for family caregivers, and discuss resources for Grant County families affected by dementia.

*Do you have a community event you'd like to publicize? Email information to editor@bmeagle.com. The deadline is noon Friday for publication the following Wednesday.*

## Congratulations Grant Union Golf Team for Winning District!



Way to make us Proud!



**Solutions**  
Certified Public Accountants

101 NE 1st Ave.  
John Day, OR 97845  
541-575-2717

## GET YOUR LONG WEEKEND ON!

Memorial Day Sale **BULK HAMBURGER SPECIALS**

Pork Bundles starting at **\$99.00**

Beef Bundles starting at **\$189.00**

Hamburgers **\$4.99 lb. 10#s**  
**\$4.50 lb. 25#s**  
or more  
limited supply

**BUNDLES ARE BACK!**

Put the finishing touch on your barbecue with our in-house cheeses and seasonings

## Russell's Custom Meats & Deli

235 N Canyon City Blvd. | John Day  
541-575-0720  
Open Mon-Fri 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

