

# Parade mainstay reflects on accomplishments

By JUSTIN DAVIS  
Blue Mountain Eagle

Seventy-two-year-old Kelly Collins has seen and done a great deal over the course of his time in Grant County.

Nowadays, Collins can be seen driving an old Suburban with a sign in the windshield urging anybody he passes to “eat beef.”

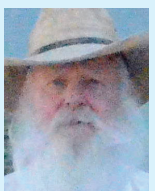
Before that, Collins was a longtime fixture in local parades as a color guard, carrying the American flag while riding horseback. He was also a member of the sheriff’s mounted patrol and search and rescue team.

And once he even stopped a runaway stagecoach. That incident happened in August 2009, when a wagon train organized to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Oregon statehood was nearing Prairie City. The driver had stepped down to fix a troublesome bit, and the horses ran away with the coach.

Collins raced after them on his own horse and managed to stop the runaway team. At the time, Collins was credited with possibly saving the passengers’ lives, according to an article in the Blue Mountain Eagle.

## GRANT COUNTY NEIGHBORS

**NAME:** Kelly Collins  
**AGE:** 72  
**RESIDENCE:** Canyon City  
**CLAIM TO FAME:** Known for riding horseback in local parades, carrying the American flag



Collins was born in Grant County and left the area following the collapse of his parents’ marriage. His journey to becoming a well-known presence in Grant County started with an unfortunate accident at the Pendleton Round-Up in 1978, when he was knocked off his horse and hit his head. The mishap left him thinking he’d spend the rest of his life paralyzed.

Collins relocated to Grant County following that accident, a move he said would not have happened had he not gotten injured. Collins rehabbed his injury over the next several years, which ultimately led to him volunteering to be the color guard at various parades throughout the county and joining the sheriff’s department in 1984.

Collins estimates he’s been the color guard in more than 100 parades from 1984 until his final parade in 2016. For Collins, the decision to be a color guard at parades throughout the county was never about accolades or recognition.

“I did not do what I did leading parades for the glory of it. I did it because I was search and rescue and a special deputy for the sheriff’s department. I did it because I was proud to be in that uniform and be associated with the sheriff’s department,” he said.

“And I always had a good horse.”

Of all the things he’s done since his return to Grant County, the thing he is the most proud of is being a mem-



Angel Carpenter/Blue Mountain Eagle, File

The Cinnabar Mountain Rendezvous parade gets started with Grant County Search and Rescue volunteer Kelly Collins leading the colorful entries in Mt. Vernon in this file image from May 23, 2015.

ber of the search and rescue team for the sheriff’s office. Collins estimates he’s been involved in around 90 search and rescue operations.

“Fortunately, I never had to bring anybody out,” Collins said.

“I was that close quite a few times,” he added.

Collins also added that not having to bring anybody out during a rescue doesn’t bother him because other team members helped those who needed it.

“They got out,” Collins said. “That was the big reason for going.”

Collins is now retired. Still, he says he misses carrying the flag in parades and being a part of the search and rescue team, though he’s not physically capable of doing those things anymore.

“I miss it every day of every year,” he said.

When asked what he does to fulfill the urge to do the things he used to do, Collins said he bites his lip and shakes

his head. “I just can’t do it anymore,” he added.

Recently, the Grant County People Mover honored Collins by painting his picture on its No. 29 bus. Naturally enough, the image shows him riding a horse and carrying the flag.

Collins said he had no knowledge that the bus was going to be adorned with his likeness prior to it happening.

“I am very proud of it,” he said.

## Lutheran minister returns to John Day

Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — A Lutheran minister who recently retired after 50 years of service at churches in Oregon and Washington is returning to his Grant County roots, and members of the community are invited to welcome him back.

Pastor Mark Bertermann of

Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Kennewick, Washington, marked his 50th year in the ministry on June 26, when he presented his retirement message. He began his pastoral career at Redeemer Lutheran Church in John Day in May 1972 and served there until 1980, when he moved to Portland with his wife and three daughters to pastor Beautiful Savior

Lutheran Church before moving on to Bethlehem Lutheran in Kennewick.

On Sept. 18 Bertermann will return to John Day to lead the 11 a.m. worship service at Redeemer Lutheran, 627 SE Hillcrest Road. A potluck lunch and reception will follow at the church, and the public is invited to attend.

People interested in attending are asked to RSVP by Sept. 14 by calling Buzz Gilmore at 541-542-2333 or Francis Kocis at 541-575-5840.

## Prairie City School to host open house

By STEVEN MITCHELL  
Blue Mountain Eagle

PRAIRIE CITY — Prairie City School District will host an open house Tuesday, Sept. 13, at 6 p.m. for the school’s K-12 students and parents at 740 Overholt St. in Prairie City.

Casey Hallgarth, Prairie City School District’s superintendent, said the open house is an opportunity for the community meet staff and teachers.

There is no charge to attend the event, which will be catered by the Oxbow Restaurant.

Parents will be asked to take a short survey to provide feedback on how the school is doing, Hallgarth said. Also, he said, the school is ask-



Contributed photo

Casey Hallgarth, Prairie City’s superintendent.

ing families to fill out forms for free and reduced-price lunches.

Those that do, Hallgarth said, will be entered to win a raffle to win a \$500 or

\$100 gift card to Huffman’s Market.

After dinner, staff introductions and the raffle, parents will meet and visit with teachers in their classrooms.

### Katherine (Katie) Margaret Herburger Johns

November 4, 1937 ~ August 6, 2022

Katherine (Katie) Margaret Herburger Johns was born on November 4, 1937 to Cedric and Sally Herburger in Canyon City, Oregon. She joined two brothers, Dave and Jack.

Katie attended school in Ashland and Rogue River, Oregon. She attended beauty school in Medford, Oregon after high school. Following her parents to Mount Vernon, she worked as a beautician in John Day.

She married the love of her life, Jack Johns, on September 12, 1959. They had three daughters, Deena Marie (Steve), Brenda Lee (Alan) and Kathie Kay (Randy). Katie was Grandma Katie to her valued and very loved grandchildren, JR Moore, Thomas Moore, Kyle Christy, Justin Burke, Emma Burke and Tyree Burke. She also had two great grandchildren, Heather and Kyle Moore.

Katie was a very talented lady. She was a wonderful wife, mother and grandmother. Her talents were many, which included sewing, painting, quilting and cooking. She loved to always have a project in the works.

Katie was active in the First Christian Church of John Day alone with the Community Church of Fox. She was President of Aglow Christian Women and was a speaker throughout Oregon at Aglow meetings. Katie was the president of the Grant County Cowbells, Vice President of the Oregon Cowbells and a 4-H leader. She taught many sewing classes and lessons. For a period, she taught sewing class at the Long Creek School. She enjoyed giving Tole painting lessons also.

Kathie, her daughter, learned Tole painting from her mom and entered her paintings in 4-H for three years and they went on to State Fair where she won Grand Champion each year.

Her daughter Brenda shared her love of cooking and they traded new recipes with each other. Katie found a recipe for poppy seed bread and instructed Brenda how to make it, and Brenda entered it in 4-H at the fair and her bread won Grand Champion at State Fair.

Deena and her mom didn’t always see eye to eye, but in the last few years they had forgiven each other and had a special kind of love for one another.

Katie was preceded in death by her parents, Cedric and Sally Herburger and her two brothers, Dave and Jack Herburger.

Katie was remembered at a Funeral Service that was held Saturday, August 13th, 2022 at the Fox Community Church and was interred at the Fox Cemetery. Memorial contributions may be made to the American Alzheimer’s Association or to the Mayo Clinic for Parkinson’s Research through Driskill Memorial Chapel at 241 S. Canyon Blvd., John Day, Oregon 97845.

To light a candle in memory of Katie, or to offer online condolences to her family, please visit [www.driskillmemorialchapel.com](http://www.driskillmemorialchapel.com). Paid for by the family of Katie Johns.



## CORRECTIONS

The Blue Mountain Eagle strives to ensure accuracy. If you see an error in one of our stories, please contact us at [editor@bmeagle.com](mailto:editor@bmeagle.com) or 541-575-0710.

## Hospice benefit races set for this Saturday

By STEVEN MITCHELL  
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — The Blue Mountain Hospice Center’s annual Strut, Stride, Straddle and Stroll/Hilton Half Marathon will return Saturday, Sept. 10, with its first full-size half marathon in almost three years.

In addition to the half marathon, the event features footraces of varying distances and a 13-mile bicycle race.

According to organizer Meredith Thomas, the annual event, which got its start about 20 years ago, is one of the hospice center’s most significant fundraisers.

Thomas said the event was dubbed the Hilton Half Marathon about five years ago in memory of T.R. Hilton, a longtime ambulance crew director at the hospital.

Thomas said the money collected from the fundraiser will help offset the cost of hospice care that some insurance companies do not cover.

Hospice care is a type of health care that helps terminally ill patients with pain and other symptoms and prioritizes comfort as they reach the end of their life.

Typically, Thomas said, it is not known that insurance may not cover hospice care until the patient has died. As a result, Thomas said,

EVENT INFORMATION	
<b>WHAT:</b> Blue Mountain Hospice Center’s annual Strut, Stride, Straddle and Stroll/Hilton Half Marathon	around halfway at Pine Creek Road and heads west back to the hospice parking lot.
<b>WHERE:</b> All races start from Blue Mountain Hospice parking lot, located at 422 W. Main Street in John Day	<b>Hilton Half Marathon:</b> The half marathon covers a little over 13 miles, starting in Prairie City at the water station on Pine Creek Road and heading west on Highway 26, ending at the hospice parking lot.
<b>WHEN:</b> Saturday, Sept. 10, at 7 a.m. with all races except for the half-marathon kicking off at 8 a.m. Transportation for Hilton Half Marathon leaves at 6:30 a.m.	Runners in the Hilton Half Marathon will take a shuttle to the water station in Prairie City that leaves from the hospice parking lot at 6:30 a.m.
<b>RACES:</b>	<b>Registration:</b>
<b>Stroll (1.5 miles):</b> Beginning at the hospice parking lot on Main Street, the race moves west and turns on Third Street near Les Schwab Tires, continues past the Grant County Fairgrounds and then loops back to Main Street, heading west back to the hospice parking lot.	\$20 adult
<b>Strut (4 miles):</b> Heads east to Highway 395 (Canyon Boulevard), then south past the Canyon City gas station before cutting over to Humbolt Street and looping back to the hospice parking lot.	\$15 child
<b>Stride (6 miles):</b> Moves west out of John Day on Highway 26 to Luce Creek Road (locally known as the “dump road”) and loops back to the hospice parking lot in John Day.	\$75 per family, up to eight
<b>Straddle (13-mile bike ride):</b> Heads east on Highway 26 towards Prairie City, then turns	\$150 per group/team of eight or more
	Pre-registration forms can be downloaded at: <a href="https://tinyurl.com/3mvkhruj">https://tinyurl.com/3mvkhruj</a>
	The registration forms can be mailed to the Blue Mountain Home Health and Hospice Center at 422 W. Main St., John Day, OR 97845, or they can be dropped off at the center until Sept. 8.
	There is an additional \$5 fee for same-day registration.
	For more information, call Meredith Thomas at 541-575-1648 or email her at <a href="mailto:mthomas@blue-mountainhospital.or">mthomas@blue-mountainhospital.or</a>

the hospice service, a nonprofit organization, is left with having to tell the family the unfortunate news.

The purpose of the fundraiser,

she said, is to enable the hospice care center to avoid these situations altogether.

“The last thing we want is for a family to have to deal with a bill

from us,” she said.

The money hospice raises, she said, allows them to pay the insurance directly so the families can focus on the grief process.

### Last Week’s Temps

John Day	HI/LO
Wednesday .....	100/57
Thursday .....	95/57
Friday .....	101/64
Saturday .....	90/53
Sunday .....	93/54
Monday .....	90/54
Tuesday .....	99/61

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 SEPT. 7-13

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
Partly cloudy	Mostly sunny	Sunny	Mostly sunny	Partly cloudy	Mostly sunny	Mostly sunny
<b>90</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>49</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>49</b>