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Art center, diner trading spaces

By JUSTIN DAVIS
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — Painted Sky Center for the Arts is moving to a new base of operations earlier than expected to make way for the Squeeze-In Restaurant's new location in a real estate version of musical chairs.

The arts center's current headquarters next to the state employment office in Canyon City is set to be vacated in favor of a new space at 116 NW Bridge Street in John Day. Painted Sky has already vacated its ceramics and leatherworking studio at 295 S. Canyon City St., which once housed a Chinese restaurant, so the Squeeze-In can set up shop there.

The new site in John Day, a former middle school, is where Painted Sky had planned to eventually wind up after receiving grant funding that would allow the art center to purchase the building.

But the need for the Squeeze-In to have a place to land after its lease at 423 W. Main St. in John Day expired at the end of October pushed up the timetable for the nonprofit's move, according to Painted Sky's Alicia Griffin.

"We contacted Shawn (Duncan) from the Squeeze-In and let her know what our future plans were. And we didn't want her to really give up on her restaurant or that option. We thought that might be a really good place for her out in Canyon City," Griffin said.

"And so we did explain this as this is a future thing, that it's not something that we can do right away or have arranged to do right away, but you know we just didn't want her to give up and that we would try to help

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Justin Davis/Blue Mountain Eagle

The front door to the new home of Painted Sky Center for the Arts at 116 NW Bridge St. in John Day is seen on Monday, Nov. 28, 2022.



Lutsenko Oleksandr/123rf

Sales of firearms with high-capacity magazines like these — and sales of the magazines themselves — would be illegal in Oregon under Measure 114, which is set to take effect Dec. 8.

BREAKING DOWN MEASURE 114

By JUSTIN DAVIS
Blue Mountain Eagle

Now that Oregon has passed one of the nation's most restrictive gun control laws, Grant County residents may be wondering: What does it mean for me?

Maybe nothing, if a lawsuit filed in federal court is successful.

If the suit fails, however, the new law could mean an end to the sale of some types of firearms in the state, the creation of a new registration database and permit system, and long waits to buy guns while the permit system is being set up.

Measure 114, also known as the Reduction of Gun Violence Act, passed by less than a 2% margin in the Nov. 8 election.

The law limits the number of rounds a magazine can hold to 10 and requires almost everybody who acquires a firearm to first obtain a purchase permit, whether the gun is

gifted, loaned, leased or bought.

Purchase permits will be issued by local law enforcement agencies for a fee of \$65 and will require a background check and the completion of a firearms training course. The measure also requires the police to maintain an electronic database of all permits, whether active, expired or revoked.

Supporters of Measure 114 say the initiative was introduced in reaction to numerous mass shootings over the years and that public safety is the sole priority of the new law.

But opponents say the measure is unconstitutional and will only make it harder for law-abiding citizens to defend themselves against criminals.

The measure is already being challenged in court by the Oregon Firearms Federation with the support of the Sherman County sheriff and a Marion County gun store owner. The suit, which seeks to have the new law overturned on constitutional grounds, also asks the court for an injunction to block the mea-

sure from taking effect.

Measure 114 is scheduled to come into force on Dec. 8.

What does it do?

Measure 114 makes a purchase permit a requirement before a firearm can be transferred in nearly all instances. The measure defines a transfer as the delivery of a firearm from one person to another, including the sale, gift, loan or lease of the firearm.

Cases where a purchase permit is not required are rare and generally involve either transfers of weapons from an individual to the police or military or the transfer of a firearm to a spouse, domestic partner or immediate family member.

The measure also outlaws the manufacture, sale, possession and importation of any magazine that accepts more than 10 rounds of ammunition as well as their use anywhere but on the owner's property or at a shooting range.

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8 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT MEASURE 114

1. Mandates a purchase permit, which includes a criminal background check and live fire training, before obtaining a firearm in most circumstances.
2. Bans the sale, manufacture, importation, use, purchase or other transfer of any large-capacity magazine (holding more than 10 rounds) in Oregon after the effective date of the measure.
3. Exceptions to the purchase permit requirement include the transfer of a firearm to a spouse or domestic partner, parent or stepparent, child or stepchild, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, aunt or uncle, first cousin, niece or nephew, and the transfer of a firearm in the event of the death of a firearm owner provided the transfer is conducted by a personal representative or a trustee of a trust created in a will.
4. High-capacity magazines purchased before the measure's enactment date are legal but can't be used anywhere but on private property or at a gun range. Attached tubular magazines for .22 rifles and lever-action rifles are also exempted.
5. Failing to comply with permit requirements is a Class A misdemeanor. A previous conviction of failing to comply with permit requirements raises a second offense to a Class B felony.
6. Being in possession of an unlawful high-capacity magazine after the measure's enactment is a Class A misdemeanor.
7. Failure to comply with permit requirements at gun shows is a Class A misdemeanor. Two previous convictions raises a third offense to a Class C felony.
8. Police departments and sheriff's offices are required to keep and maintain a database of all purchase permits, whether active, inactive or revoked.

Two months in captivity

La Grande native looks back on 62-day ordeal in Haiti

By ANDREW CUTLER
The Observer

LADYSMITH, Wis. — They were coming back from an orphanage in Ganthier, Haiti, when they spotted the roadblock ahead, outside the capital of Port-au-Prince.

Melodi Korver, a La Grande native, sat in a passenger van with her husband, Ryan.

It was October 2021, and for the past few months Ryan had worked as support staff for Christian Aid Ministry in Titanyen, Haiti, while Melodi took care of the couple's home and children.

In the van were 16 Americans and one Canadian, including Melodi Korver's children, Andre, 3, and Laura, 10 months. As they approached the roadblock, the adults in the van wondered what would happen next.

They didn't have long to wait. Moments later men with weapons appeared in vehicles and motioned for them to drive toward the roadblock.

The day marked the beginning of 62 days under the guard of members of one of Haiti's most notorious gangs. More than a year later, Korver and her family look back on that day as a defining moment, the beginning of an ordeal that strengthened their faith.

"I still rather believe that they were out looking for people to kidnap and thought, 'Oh, a passenger van, this looks like material.' But when they



Melodi Korver/Contributed Photo

Melodi Korver and her husband, Ryan, and children, Andre and Laura, pose for a photo on Dec. 16, 2021, at the Haitian mission where Ryan worked. They had only recently returned to the mission after escaping from kidnappers.

realized that they actually had 17 people in there, they weren't quite sure what to do," said Korver, who was born in La Grande in 1993 and lived in the community until 2018.

The kidnappers belonged to the 400 Mawozo gang. They forced the van to follow them to two out-of-the-way stick, mud and concrete houses, Korver said.

"And they lined us all up along the side of one house," she said. "Kind of preliminary searched us, took a video of us and then put us into one room at the back of the house. It was fairly small, 10 by 12 or so."

The kidnappers brought them some food that first night and some water, but "nobody was hungry," Korver said.

"Later they brought out an English-speaking man, and at that point he was saying, 'I'm on your side. This is all political,'" she said. "We weren't sure exactly how much to believe."

That first night, the group discovered there were 11 other hostages in a room next to theirs.

"They were usually tied, hand and foot, in the room. That was how most of the other hostages were treated," Korver said.

Wrestling with decision

Korver and her group were not tied up, and, eventually, had some access to a backyard guarded by thick undergrowth. Five of the captives had earlier reached freedom,

"AFTER SOME THINGS WE'D SEEN WE WERE PRETTY SURE THESE GANGSTERS DIDN'T HAVE OUR BEST INTERESTS IN MIND."

— Melodi Korver, who was kidnapped in 2021 while doing humanitarian work in Haiti

whittling the numbers of the missionary group down to 12.

Unknown to Korver and her group, the gang was demanding \$1 million ransom for each captive.

"They told us if one of you escaped, we're gonna shoot all the rest of them. They were pretty sure we were fairly helpless, too, as far as just knowing our way around," she said.

Korver said if they did try to escape, the group would "stick out like a sore thumb because we were white and there are not many white people in Haiti and you have miles of gang territory before you get out of it."

The idea of an escape, though, never completely evaporated.

"For a long time we had been

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