

Holiday feast feeds community spirit

John Day Elks Club prepares more than 400 dinners for Thanksgiving

By BENNETT HALL
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — Barely organized chaos prevailed in the kitchen of the John Day Elks Lodge on Thursday, Nov. 23, with as many as a dozen people bustling about making final preparations for the club's annual Community Thanksgiving Dinner.

It was a little after noon on Thanksgiving Day. Dozens of takeout meals had already gone out the door, and the first wave of in-house diners were queuing up to fill their plates. Weeks of preparation and two days of frenzied activity had led up to this moment, and now it was here. Showtime.

Looking up from the stove where he was whipping up his umpteenth batch of instant mashed potatoes, Charlie Caughlin surveyed the hectic scene and shook his head in a sort of dazed amazement.

"We cooked 17 turkeys and we carved 65 pounds of ham," said Caughlin, a past exalted ruler of the John Day lodge who now serves as leading knight. "So far we've gone through 7 gallons of gravy and we're not even half done yet."

Even in the midst of all the madness, however, Caughlin had a smile on his face — as did pretty much all the other volunteers working frantically to put together a holiday meal on a grand scale.

"We're a small lodge, but there's a lot of good people here," said volunteer Joe Rubrecht, a recent transplant from the Portland area. "This is my first year doing this,



Photos by Bennett Hall/Blue Mountain Eagle

Volunteers dish up food for the Community Thanksgiving Dinner at the John Day Elks Lodge on Thursday, Nov. 23, 2022. From left are Cody Wilson, Cala Fuller, Leslie Traylor and Adele Wilson.



After delivering 40 meals to homebound residents in Prairie City, volunteer Christine Coyne picks up some boxed Thanksgiving dinners to take home to her family.

but listening to people who have been here a long time, this event means a lot to this community."

Last year the Elks gave away around 300 Thanksgiving dinners, but the club easily eclipsed that total this year. By 3 p.m. on Thursday, the Elks had boxed up about 200 takeout and delivery meals and served 230 in-house diners — "and the volunteers won't eat until after 4," said Josh Fuller.

Fuller was one of about 40 volunteers who pitched in to put the meal together — not counting the 10 or so drivers

who delivered heaping plates of food to homebound residents across the county.

"They ranged all the way out to Dayville and Bates," said Chauncy Groves, who stayed busy washing dishes and whatever else needed doing in the kitchen and dining room.

Fuller's job was to order the food for the feast — a process that started in October.

In addition to 17 turkeys and seven hams, the provisions included 120 pounds of sweet potatoes, 20 pounds of dry stuffing mix, 40 pounds of instant mashed potatoes, 60 pounds of green beans, 60 pounds of corn, 24 pies, 400 rolls and "a lot of butter," Fuller said.

How much butter, exactly? Try 180 pounds.

This year's food bill added up to \$5,900, covered (barely) by a \$6,000 grant from the Elks National Foundation, which is supported by donations from local lodges like the one in John Day.



George Johns carries his plate to the table. His favorite Thanksgiving dishes are turkey and mashed potatoes — with plenty of gravy.

Janel Parker, the club's grant coordinator, said any leftover cash will be rolled into other projects to support the community, such as putting on a fancy dinner for Grant County's small school prom next spring. The event has been on hiatus because of the pandemic, and Parker said it was especially important to bring it back this year to help restore a sense of normalcy to area teens.

"It's supposed to be a drug- and alcohol-free experience," she said. "Because of depression caused by COVID, we need to prop up our community."

It's exactly that sort of spirit that animates the Elks' annual Thanksgiving dinner, said Kori Martin. Looking around the crowded, steaming kitchen, where her fellow volunteers jostled one another as they fixed food for their friends and neighbors, Martin commented on the event's family atmosphere.

"We hold our community in our hearts," she said. "We're just a family. And we feed our family."

Grafton Lee Pauls Jr.

September 3, 1936 ~ November 23, 2022

Grafton Lee Pauls Jr., age 86, of Dayville passed away on November 23rd, 2022 at St. Charles Medical Center in Bend, Oregon. A visitation will take place on Friday, December 2nd from 4:00 until 6:00 pm at Driskill Memorial Chapel in John Day. A graveside service will be held on Saturday, December 3rd at 1:00 PM at the Dayville Cemetery. Pastor Skip Inscore will officiate and the Navy will perform Military Honors accompanied by the American Legion Post 106. A reception will follow at the Dayville Community Church.



Grafton was born September 3rd, 1936 in Long Beach, California to Grafton Lee Pauls Sr. and Charlotte Elizabeth (Kilstrom) Pauls. He served in the US Navy on a destroyer in the 1950s and continued going to sea with the Navy as a civilian, carrying troops to many trouble spots. From 1957 to 1966, he served in the Korean, Vietnam, Congo and the Indonesian/Malayan conflicts. He loved to travel, visiting 70 countries, Antarctica and many African nations. He travelled by rail across Siberia and Europe. He also visited every state in the United States and every province in Canada.

On June 6, 1967, he married LaVonne Junker, and began ranching in Washington state. He was a member of the National Cattlemen's Assoc., councilman of the Washington Cattlemen's Assoc., President of Lewis County Cattlemen's Assoc., a member of the National Woolgrowers Assoc., first vice-president of the Washington Woolgrowers Assoc., president of S.W. Washington Sheep Producers Assoc., vice-chairman of the Washington State Animal Damage Control Board, (Aphis). He was also a member of the Chehalis River Watershed Council, the Washington Cattlemen's Assoc. representative for Ad Hoc Committee on Endangered, Sensitive and Threatened Species listing and delisting, the Tin Can Sailors Veterans Assoc., the USS Nicholas DD 449 Veterans Assoc., and a council member of the St. Paul Lutheran Church in Winlock, Washington.

He came to Dayville, Oregon in June of 1993. He built a house near Dayville and furnished it with his own hands.

Grafton is survived by his greatest love, his wife LaVonne and their two children, Betsy Walter and Brent Pauls.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center through Driskill Memorial Chapel, 241 S. Canyon Blvd., John Day, OR 97845. To offer online condolences to Grafton's family, please visit www.driskillmemorialchapel.com. Paid for by the family of Grafton Pauls.

Maxwell Justin Upmeyer

September 11, 1973 - November 4, 2022

Maxwell Justin Upmeyer, of Evans, Colorado took his final ride at the age of 49 after a sudden loss of his life.

He was the son of Michael and Norma (Guilliams) Upmeyer Sr. He was born in Ontario, Oregon, on September 11, 1973. Maxwell attended multiple schools in Payette, Idaho, Springdale, Washington, John Day, Oregon, New Plymouth, Idaho and Baker City, Oregon.

He specialized in mechanics and truck driving, but had many other jobs throughout his life. When not at work you could find Maxwell outside. He loved to ski and snowboard, as well as snowmobile in the winter. During the warmer months of the year, he enjoyed hill climbing on his motorcycle, along with other outdoor activities.

Maxwell was married to Laura (Taylor) Edwards. They later divorced. After a few years, he met Siera Sears, who he had his beloved son Dalton with.

He leaves behind his son, Dalton, of Colorado, mother Norma of Baker City; sister, Mary Kenworthy of Payette, ID, brother Michael "JR" Upmeyer of Pendleton, along with 13 nieces and nephews and multiple cousins, aunts and uncles.

Maxwell was preceded in death by his dad, Michael Upmeyer Sr., grandparents John and Alice Upmeyer, Jack and Mary Guilliams, brother-in-law, Charles Kenworthy, and numerous other family members.

There are no services planned at this time. In lieu of flowers, please donate to either the Go Fund Me for funeral expenses at GoFundMe, Michael Upmeyer, https://gofund.me/a859627f or for suicide prevention. Suicide prevention hotline 1-800-273-8255.



LOCAL BRIEFING

Bank announces 2022 dividend

HEPPNER — BEO Bancorp will pay a dividend of \$1 per share for 2022, the holding company announced.

The dividend will be paid no later than Dec. 15 to shareholders of record as of Dec. 9.

"BEO Bancorp has paid a dividend 36 of the past 37 years," Chairman Brad Anderson said in a news release. "Dividends reflect the financial stability and profitability of the bank. We are very happy to be able to provide this dividend to our shareholders."

The \$1-a-share premium is the same amount paid to shareholders in 2021.

BEO Bancorp is the holding company for the Bank of Eastern Oregon, which operates 20 branches and four loan production offices in Oregon, Washington and Idaho. Headquartered in Heppner, the bank has branches in John Day and Prairie City.

BPA aims to hold rates steady

PORTLAND — The Bonneville Power Administration has announced a proposal that would hold the rates it charges for electric power and transmission flat for 2024 and 2025.

BPA is a nonprofit entity that markets wholesale electricity from 31 federal dams and one nuclear plant to 142 Northwest electric utilities serving Oregon, Washington, Idaho, western Montana and parts of four other states.

In a news release, BPA officials said strong financial performance during fiscal 2022 should enable the agency to keep from raising rates while providing a solid financial buffer against changing market conditions.

As a nonprofit, BPA is legally required to cover its costs and adjust rates accordingly. The agency establishes rates for two-year periods. The current rate proposal, if approved by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, would take effect on Oct. 1, 2023, and remain in force through Sept. 30, 2025.

Virtual visits for COVID-19

PORTLAND — The Oregon Health Authority is offering free telehealth visits for people at increased risk for severe COVID-19 illness, the agency announced in a news release.

The new program, a partnership with Color Health, launched on Nov. 14. It allows all Oregonians, regardless of insurance status, to make a no-cost telehealth appointment with a clinician to find out if they are eligible for a potentially lifesaving oral treatment.

People at increased risk for severe COVID-19 illness whose symptoms began in the previous five days are eligible for treatment. If eligibility is confirmed, a clinician can prescribe the medication during the telehealth appointment.

"These medicines can help prevent severe COVID-19 illness, hospitalization and even death," said Dr. Andrea Lara, OHA's therapeutics clinical and equity lead. "They should be available for free for anyone who needs them, whether or not the person has health insurance."

OHA recommends that people with COVID-19 symptoms or a positive test first call or visit a health care provider. If they don't have a provider or can't get an appointment quickly, they can find a federal Test to Treat site. If they can't get to a Test to Treat site, they can make a telehealth appointment through Color Health.

To make an appointment, go online at Color.com/COVID-19-treatment_OR and take the survey or call 833-273-6330 and describe your symptoms.

Telehealth visits are available from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. seven days a week, with consultation offered in 17 languages.

Blue Mountain Eagle

DEATH NOTICES

Jack Harvard Kight and Elaine May (Jenkins) Kight

Jack Harvard Kight, 80, and Elaine May (Jenkins) Kight, 76, were both discovered deceased in their home near Mt. Vernon on Nov. 19, 2022.

Their family will be planning a memorial service, to honor both of them, at a future date. Updates of date, time and location will be published as planning progresses. To light a candle for Jack and Elaine or to offer online condolences to their family, please visit www.driskillmemorialchapel.com.

CORRECTION

All-league honors: An article in the Nov. 23 edition about Grant County prep athletes winning all-league honors had Reece Jacobs' high school class wrong. Jacobs is a sophomore. The article also failed to mention Skylar McKay was named to the High Desert League's second volleyball team. The Eagle regrets the errors.

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 or 541-575-0710.

Last Week's Temps

John Day	HI/LO
Wednesday	42/26
Thursday	48/27
Friday	44/29
Saturday	38/27
Sunday	37/25
Monday	32/18
Tuesday	31/27

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 Nov. 30-DEC. 6

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
39	35	29	33	32	30	28
32	21	26	23	17	14	14