

Hermiston man dies after fight

By **JADE McDOWELL**
Staff Writer

A memorial service will be held today for a Hermiston man who died late Friday night from injuries sustained in a fight that took place north of Hermiston on Jan. 20.

David Wayne Newton, 53, died at Sacred Heart Medical Center in Spokane at 10:50 p.m. Friday night after being taken off life support the night before.

According to the Umatilla County Sheriff's Office, witnesses reported that Newton sustained a head injury during a physical altercation with Lloyd Allan Terpening, 54, from Irrigon, at a commercial property on 81252 Hwy 395 Wednesday night. Both men were reportedly living on the property while helping clean it out.

Undersheriff Jim Littlefield said Monday that Terpening had been questioned and was scheduled to take a polygraph test but had not been arrested and no charges had been filed.

"After the entire investigation is complete we will turn it over to the district attorney's office," he said, noting that investigating such cases takes



David Newton sits with his wife, Terina, during an interview in Oct., 2009, at their home in Hermiston.

time and is "not always cut and dried."

Hilda White, Newton's mother, said Terpening, who goes by Allan, was a close friend of Newton's. When her son was out of cellphone minutes she used to call Terpening because she knew they were probably together.

"This may sound strange to you, but I'm not angry with Allan because he has a long road to go," she said.

White said the fact that he would have to live with the guilt of whatever happened that night, and the loss of his best friend, seemed enough punishing to her and she didn't

think her son would want his friend to go to prison.

Newton was one of those people who "never knew a stranger," she said. She said he took great pride in his skill as a mechanic, and there were people in town who wouldn't let anyone but him touch their motorcycle.

"He was good at what he did, and he was proud of that," she said.

Newton was born in Southern California and spent time there as a child before moving to Hermiston in time to play football for Hermiston High School. After graduation he joined the Navy and



STAFF PHOTO BY JADE McDOWELL

Members of the Oregon State Police forensics unit examine a truck outside of a commercial business on Highway 395 north of Hermiston, where an alleged assault took place.

spent a few years stationed in Norfolk, Virginia.

"He was a good-looking guy in that uniform," White remembered.

He had four children, who White said adored him. She said he had been separated from his wife Terina Newton for the last four years but they were still on amicable terms with each other and had never filed for divorce. In 2009 the couple agreed to be interviewed by the *East Oregonian* about their journey together in overcoming a history of drug abuse and domestic violence.

"Dave was a good guy, he really was," White said. "He had his faults but he was a good guy."

In 2014 Newton was in the news again after driving Daniel Dechand, then 25, to the hospital after Dechand was shot in the chest by Timothy Kelly in Newton's vehicle. A grand jury later ruled the incident was self-defense.

White said she knew Newton did his best to try to save Dechand, but he never wanted to talk about what happened that day.

Newton was the spit-

ting image of his late grandfather, she said, and had the same strong sense of humor.

"I miss his laugh. He had a very hearty laugh," she said.

She said the family, especially Newton's children, have had a difficult time in the days since Newton was rushed to the hospital by his daughter Shavon Newton, who White said was present when her father was injured. White said her son Jeff picked her up that night and they rushed to the hospital in Spokane at 4 a.m. Based on the extent of brain damage he had suffered the family made the decision to take him off of life support on Thursday evening, and he died late Friday night.

A celebration of life with military honors will be held today at 11 a.m. at Burns Mortuary chapel in Hermiston. A gathering for family and friends will follow at 1365 S. Highway 395, Hermiston.

White said Newton did not have life insurance, and friends of the family have created a GoFundMe account at www.gofundme.com/cykzhg6s to help cover cremation expenses.

Friends, family, colleagues remember Irrigon councilwoman

Sorenson died of heart failure Jan. 18

By **GEORGE PLAVERN**
Staff Writer

Irrigon councilwoman Christine Sorenson died Jan. 18 of congenital heart failure. She was 72.

"She worked right up to her dying day," said Phyllis Danielson, a friend of Sorenson's who served with her in the Irrigon Chamber of Commerce board. "She was absolutely committed."

Sorenson first came to Irrigon with her husband, Andrew, in 1994. They used to make yearly trips to visit friends in town, and especially enjoyed fishing on the Columbia River.

For years, Sorenson owned a storage company on Highway 730 and became active with the chamber, where she and Danielson first met. Danielson, who owns Stokes Landing Bed & Breakfast, said she was struck by Sorenson's positivity and dedication to the community.

"Christina was the one who could be counted on to hold our feet to the fire," Danielson said. "She never settled for less than the best. You had to do it right, and you had to do it well."

When the chamber nearly folded in 2013, Danielson and Sorenson were part of the effort to rally support and reform the organization's board of directors. Along with Julie Dick and Barb Huwe, the four women helped get the group back on its feet, erasing \$1,500 in previous debt. Sorenson was always proud of that accomplishment, Danielson said.

"She was absolutely a key player in that," Danielson said.

Sorenson also served on the Irrigon City Council and had been appointed mayor pro tem before she died. The council met on Tuesday, Jan. 19 — one day after Sorenson's death — and held a moment of silence before proceeding with their agenda. Mayor Sam Heath said it was a difficult night for everyone.

"Everybody's hearts were really heavy," she said. "There was a point where I thought I would have to excuse myself."

Heath said the council will appoint a new mayor pro tem at February's meeting. The city charter states a vacant council seat will be filled by appointment.

Sorenson was well-liked and a pillar of the community, Heath said.

"Her vision was to see this town move forward, and make it the best little place for people to want to come live," she said. "She kept her community first ... She was always thinking about the people."

The oldest daughter of a U.S. Marines lieutenant,

Sorenson graduated magna cum laude with a degree in education from Western Connecticut State University. She met and married her second husband, Andrew, in 1990 while living in Boise. They later came to Irrigon to be closer to friends and fishing.

Andrew Sorenson said his wife's interests revolved around helping people in town. Christine's Storage became a place for people to come for support, whether they were customers or not.

"I don't know how to explain it. She was basically the shoulder to lean on if someone had a problem," he said. "She was always helping, if she could. She was a go-to in this town."

Sorenson raised two

sons, Robert and Chris Westlake, from her first marriage. Chris, her youngest, works as a senior project superintendent for a construction company in Connecticut. But he said his mom's heart was always in the West.

"She really loved the outdoors, and freedom associated with the West," Westlake said.

A celebration of life for Sorenson was held Satur-

day at Burns Mortuary in Hermiston, followed by a gathering at Stokes Landing Senior Center in Irrigon. Westlake said it was great to see the outpouring of support from the community.

"She was the best. It's really hard to sum it up more than that," he said. "She wanted the best for us, and wanted nothing less than our best. It did us well in our lives."



Christine Sorenson, who served on the Irrigon City Council and with the Irrigon Chamber of Commerce, died on Jan. 18. Friends and colleagues described Sorenson as a pillar of the community.

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STUDENT OF THE WEEK

Ryan Hahn
ARLINGTON HIGH SCHOOL

Ryan works hard and helps other students by encouraging them to do well. He is out for multiple sports and involved in many activities both in and out of school. Ryan works locally for the Arlington Child Care Center and really likes his job and the children. Ryan is Senior class president and successful in his college prep classes. He enjoys playing video games and building stuff. Ryan is headed for college somewhere in Oregon fall of 2016 with a goal to study career opportunities

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