

1,000-mile journey for CASA

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
STAFF WRITER

The pack Charles Clupny carried on his 1,000-mile hike through Europe only weighed 30 pounds, but he brought back enough stories to last a lifetime.

“I have more pictures than I know what to do with,” he said.

Clupny started walking the Camino de Santiago from Le Puy, France, to the coast of Spain on April 12 and returned to the United States on July 5. He used the walk to raise money (\$5,200 in all) and awareness for Court Appointed Special Advocates, which assigns children in the foster care system a volunteer “CASA” to act as a third-party advocate on their behalf in court.

From April 12 to May 1 — the first 200 miles — Clupny and his wife Carol walked together. They visited friends for a few days at the end of the first leg, then Carol flew home.

Clupny’s journey was far from over, however. For the next few weeks he journeyed across mountains and valleys for another 800 miles, waking at 5:30 a.m. and walking 15 to 20 miles a day.

“There were days that I walked that I didn’t see anyone all day, and I walked eight to nine hours some days,” he said.

Some days were difficult as he walked rough, steep paths up mountains led only by a guidebook. He dodged lightning strikes and took shelter in a barn for an hour and a half while it rained “buckets.”

In the evenings, he would arrive at one of the hotels or other resting places designated for pilgrims on the Camino and ask that they call ahead to reserve his next day’s resting place. He would dine with other pilgrims who were also spending the night there. If there was WiFi, he would use a messaging app to talk with his wife.

Not all parts of the trail were quiet. There were sections where Clupny passed or was passed by travelers from Finland, Russia, Italy, South Korea and just about any country he could think of.

There was the woman who called herself “Turtle,” who was walking the Camino de Santiago to quit smoking and drinking. One man, a fellow American, saw Clupny’s CASA shirt and said his children went through the foster system. A Bulgarian CEO spoke



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED BY CHARLES CLUPNY
Charles Clupny on the Camino de Santiago in Europe.

perfect English. An Italian named Luigi had started the walk not from France but from his own home in Italy.

The most memorable person Clupny met was Bülent, a Turkish television star whom Clupny saw multiple times after lending him some ibuprofen for his sore knee.

As memorable as the people were the places. Clupny said he can’t pick just one “favorite” place he saw on his trek, but the most memorable for him was a small 12th-century church he saw after leaving the village of Zubiri, Spain. A man pulled up and offered to give him a tour. It turned out that the man, originally from South Africa, had moved to Spain to restore the old church after seeing it on his own pilgrimage.

“The doors were from Roman times,” Clupny said. “My goodness! It was like walking through history.”

Another time, Clupny visited a Benedictine monastery that had been operating for 1,500 years. He was touched by a mural of St. Bernard on his death bed, surrounded by his loved ones and angels coming down to take him home.

“The look on his face was like ‘I want to go, but

I want to stay with you,’” Clupny said.

That idea was especially poignant to Clupny, whose mother died while he was on the final stretch of his journey. He had sent her a post card every day while he was gone, and he plans to compile those post cards with photos of his trek into a book to give to each of his six siblings, dedicating it to their mother.

After Clupny reached the ocean and could go no further, he bought a new set of clothes in Madrid, spent a few extra days in Spain, and headed home.

“These are shoes I bought in Madrid because my wife told me not to come home in the clothes I wore on the trail,” he said, pointing to his feet.

Umatilla Morrow County Head Start held a dinner for him last week so people could hear about the trip and the \$5,200 he raised for CASA.

Training for anyone interested in becoming a Court Appointed Special Advocate will be held in offices at 502 W. Standard Ave. in Hermiston Oct. 8-11 and Oct. 15-18 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. For more information contact Tina Fox, 541-278-6292.

Trustee to take over management of Boardman dairies, Lost Valley Farm

By **GEORGE PAVLEN**
EO MEDIA GROUP

A bankruptcy judge in California will appoint a trustee to operate Lost Valley Farm, Oregon’s second-largest dairy, after finding owner Greg te Velde is “unwilling, or unable to comply with his duties as a fiduciary.”

The ruling, handed down Sept. 12, states te Velde has continued his long-standing pattern of drug use and gambling while owing creditors \$160 million — including \$68 million to Rabobank, a Netherlands-based agricultural lender.

In addition to Lost Valley Farm near Boardman, te Velde will lose control of his two dairies in California — GJ te Velde Ranch in Tip-ton, and Pacific Rim Dairy in Corcoran — with a combined total of 53,382 cattle.

When reached Friday, te Velde said he had no comment on the ruling.

The U.S. Department of Justice asked Judge Frederick Clement to appoint a trustee for all three of te Velde’s dairies, citing his alleged drug use, gambling and lack of financial transparency.

Since filing for bankruptcy, te Velde has continued to use methamphetamine two or three times per week and has gambled away \$2,000 to \$7,000 per month, according to court documents.

Te Velde has blamed his financial problems not on his lifestyle, but rather on market forces outside his control, such as low milk prices and construction cost overruns at Lost Valley. But creditors in court papers say they believe that “darker forces have caused his insolvency, or if not the cause, preclude te Velde from effectively resolving his debt problems.”

Te Velde also does not abide by the orders of the bankruptcy court, Clement stated in his ruling. For example, after declaring bankruptcy, te Velde borrowed \$205,000 from Pasco Farms without court approval. Between May 8 and June 2, te Velde was authorized to personally withdraw \$10,000, but instead took \$38,420, explaining he was “unaccustomed to personal bank accounts, took the cash he needed, and authorized his bookkeeper to pay his per-

sonal bills from the dairy accounts.”

Lost Valley Farm opened in April 2017 after receiving a wastewater management permit from the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality and Department of Agriculture, which jointly manage the state’s confined animal feeding operation, or CAFO, program.

Almost immediately, the dairy began racking up permit violations, including 32 infractions related to waste storage between June 28, 2017 and May 9, 2018. The state attempted to revoke the permit in June, though a Multnomah County Circuit Court judge ruled in August that Lost Valley Farm could stay in operation while te Velde and regulators worked out an agreement to get the dairy back in compliance.

Lost Valley is within the Lower Umatilla Basin Groundwater Management Area, established by DEQ in 1990 for elevated levels of groundwater nitrates. A spokeswoman for the Oregon Department of Agriculture said regulators continue to inspect the facility routinely, and have conducted 11 inspections since June 1.

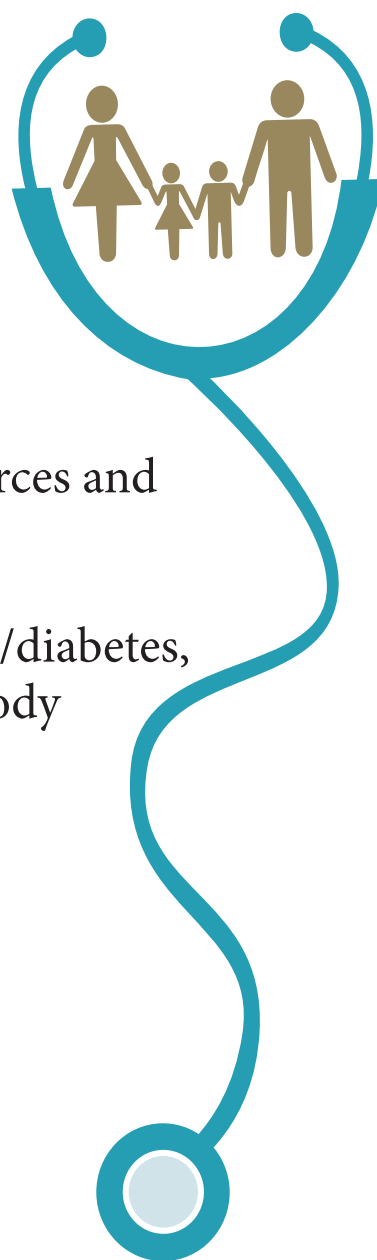
Family Health & Fitness Day



Saturday, September 22, 2018
9am-2pm at Hermiston High School

FREE Health & Wellness Event for All Ages

- Teddy Bear Clinic
- Cooking Classes
- Dental Screens and Onsite Treatment for Uninsured
- On-site Mammograms
- Yoga and Zumba sessions
- SHIBA
- Early childhood Activities
- Community Health Resources and Programs
- Screenings:
- Blood pressures, lipid, A1c/diabetes, hearing, vision, balance, body composition, respiratory health and more!!
- Helmet Fittings
- Giant Inflatable Colon
- Door Prizes
- Health Snacks
- And SO Much More for Children, Seniors and Everyone in Between!



Questions? Contact angie.treadwell@oregonstate.edu