Missing in Paradise
Out of the void: The many ghosts of the McKenzie Valley

By Brenton Gicker
The McKenzie River Valley — the collective name given to Lane County’s nine unincorporated communi-
ties known as Cedar Flat, Camp Creek, Walterville, Leaburg, Vida, Nimrod, Finn Rock, Blue River, and McKenzie Bridge — is known for its small-town charm, beautiful outdoors and, currently, scorching wildfires.

But the area also has a dark underbelly. Numerous people have gone missing in the area recently, and the bodies of two of those people have been recovered in just the past few months, leading some to speculate that something sinister may be going on.

However, according to the Lane County Sheriff’s Office (LCSO), none of these cases appear to be connected. In a July 18, KMTR News story on four people missing in the Blue River/Vida area, LCSO Public Information Officer Sgt. Tom Spedlrich says, “The best I could do is put any minds at ease on that is to say we have not discovered any evidence that leads us to believe that they are linked or related or that there is a serial killer.”

Daming Xu has been missing since 2002. He adds, “Certainly if we’re able to uncover any information that would lead us to believe that, we would be letting the public know for safety reasons, but we have nothing that tells us that that’s the case right here. It’s a wooded, wilderness, rural area. It’s tough terrain. It can be hard to find people if they go missing in those areas, so while I can’t say definitively that there’s not a link, we have nothing that makes us think that there is at this point.”

Even if the cases are not connected — and even if it turns out there is no foul play involved in them — it seems clear that there are many hidden skeletons in the vast wilderness of the McKenzie River Valley that are waiting to be found.

Some of these skeletons undoubtedly belong to people who got lost and disappeared; others seem to belong to people who chose to disappear, in other cases — such as the case of Shane Sprunger — it seems possible something more nefarious happened. I do not personally believe any of these cases are linked and, in my opinion, only Sprunger’s case has hints that foul play was involved.

The following is an overview of some of McKenzie River Valley’s missing persons and mysteries.

**Mekenna Christine Reiley**

Mekenna Christine Reiley, 40, was reported missing by loved ones on April 5, 2023, after a bizarre encounter with someone outside a food cart.

“Can’t emphasize enough how important import bus drivers?” - Page 11

**Sheriff’s Reports**

Area resident reported a drone was flying over their property and up to their window.

**Celebrating 4-H**

Changing kids’ lives and teaching them skills for a lifetime!

**Will McKenzie import bus drivers?**

School board asked for recruitment and retention

FINN ROCK: Transportation issues and how they impact education were at the core of public testimony at last Wednesday’s meeting of the McKenzie School Board. Six employees and community members all said they fear an end of an era may be in the offing if a decision is made to charter outside services.

In a May, 2022 posting the district was offering a $1,200 sign-on hiring bonus for new bus drivers who could earn up to $21 per hour driving daily morning and after school routes. The ad went on to note they could generally expect to drive Monday through Friday, averaging about 16 hours per week.

Hiring and retaining bus drivers is a problem regionally and nationally, bus driver Mark Dean told the board, despite an average salary of $32 to $37 per hour in Springfield. He questioned why the board refused to place the hiring and retention of drivers on their agenda, after being told the matter should be limited to collective bargaining discussions.

“This is not a wage issue,” Dean said. “I’d love to stay and just wish you could bring us to parity. My son is making more at a food cart.”

Others feared what could happen if the district decides to hire outside the local community. Dave Sanders, who has two children enrolled at McKenzie, said he “can’t emphasize enough how important import bus drivers?” - Page 11

**New plans for Blue River Drive**

Public input sought for town’s “Main Street”

**“Brighter Future” enters year 2**

Construction skills translate into places to live

A project to create “transitional shelters” for people facing tough times is showing signs of success. That assessment was shared last week by students during a celebration at the Everyone Village in Eugene, where homes that were constructed at 16 schools last week by students during a celebration for people facing tough times is showing signs of success. That assessment was shared last week by students during a celebration for people facing tough times is showing signs of success. That assessment was shared last week by students during a celebration for people facing tough times is showing signs of success.

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Begin in 2022, the Constructing a Brighter Future program teaches teens to work with their hands while at the same time helping people transition to a more stable living environment. “It’s a great opportunity for students to learn, get a trade, and help out in the community,” Jeanette Brown feels. “I’m so grateful that they put their hands, heart and work into it.”

Brown is looking forward to moving into one of the tiny homes herself, as well as having a space with a porch and room outside for a garden. “I’m excited,” she said. “I’ve always wanted to live in a tiny home. This program is one of the best I’ve ever heard of.”

Jesse Quinn of the Lane Workforce Partnership agrees. “To our knowledge, we have not seen a project in comparison across the country that even comes close.”

Blue River: Lane County Public Works is asking people to weigh in on the latest designs for Blue River Drive. Details of the pro-

**Parallel parking, along with a “parking pocket,” could be in the works if people show support**

**Changing kids’ lives and teaching them skills for a lifetime!**

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In previous proposals, the county asked people to comment on things they both favored and would oppose if changes were made. Gaining favor were things like a 20 mph speed zone through downtown and pedestrian-activated flashing beacons. Others were opposed to head-in parking that could result in more damage from doors slamming into ad-

**New plans - Page 4**

**Will McKenzie import bus drivers? - Page 11**

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**New plans - Page 4**
Letters to the Editor

This week, and every new week, newspapers are for you.

Americans have more media options than ever. We are inundated with stories, memes, videos, and promotions 24 hours a day. Most of us are on social media, which is built to provide an endless feed of content to keep us glued to our screens. Unfortunately, misinformation is prevalent, and much of that content isn’t fact-checked, verified, or professionally produced. The result is that we’re not always aware of what we need to know, or the information is what is most likely to impact our lives. That’s where local newspapers come in. Your local newspaper takes a different approach.

National Newspaper Week is a good opportunity to recognize the commitment that local newspapers make to the communities they serve. Your local newspaper is just a phone call away for reporters who are trained to provide reliable information about the issues that matter most. Whether it’s the latest happening from the local school board, changes in real estate zoning, high school football scores, or a review of that new restaurant you’ve been wanting to try, newspapers deliver what’s important to you.

Your local newspaper is far more than just print. In the ever-changing media landscape, local newspapers have evolved to reach multi-channel content providers. From websites to apps, emails, newsletters, videos, and podcasts, local newspapers are delivering news in innovative ways. As a reader, you get to choose when and where to get the news you need, and no matter the method, you can always be assured what you’re reading is credible and reliable. Although the format of how readers use to connect with their local newspaper might vary, it’s clear that newspapers are relied on as the source for local news. A recent national study conducted by the independent research firm Codia Ventures shows that 79% of Americans use local newspapers to stay informed about their communities and depend on them to feel connected and to decide where they stand on local issues and to find places and things to do.

Further, six out of 10 American adults use newspaper advertising to help them decide what brands, products, and local services to buy. It’s clear that local newspapers are vital to society.

In spite of the new ways to connect with your local newspaper, let’s appreciate and support the local newspapers that are facing significant challenges. Rising costs, national competitors and the way those competitors are using newspapers’ content without compensation have all impacted your local newspaper. Now, more than ever, we need their commitment to journalism’s core values. As we recognize National Newspaper Week, let’s focus on the vital role that newspapers play, and consider how we can support them. Subscribing or advertising in your local newspaper not only supports the newspapers, but it is also an investment in your community.

On a national level, the Community News and Small Business Support Act (HR 4756) has recently been introduced in Congress. This bill would provide local newspapers with financial support for their newsroom employees and would go a long way to providing your newspaper with support for the reporters and photographers that are sorely needed. Encourage your members of Congress to support this bill!

Whether you access the content from your local newspaper in print or online, remember that it is produced for you. And behind the articles, columns, and images your name appears accompanies the name of local residents who are committed to making your community stronger. Join me in thanking your local newspaper – during National Newspaper Week – for the good work it does to keep your community informed.

Dean Ridings
CEO of America’s Newspapers
Lawrenceville, GA

Guest Opinion

By Ken Rawles

A missed opportunity: How the school board overlooked an essential community concern

By Ken Rawles

The views and opinions expressed in this op-ed are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of McKenzie Valley School District.

Guest Opinion

The following day, Wednesday, September 27, the Eagle team traveled to Eddyville for a second double header of the week. The first match at Mapleton begins at 4:30 pm and the second match will begin at 6:00 pm.

The McKenzie Varsity Cross Country teams travel to Adair Village on Wednesday, September 27, to participate in the Santiam Christian HS & MS Invitational. The Varsity Girls 5,000 meters race starts at 5:00 pm and the Varsity Boys 5,000 m. race will follow with a 5:40 pm start.

The McKenzie Eagles Volleyball team hosts a double-header match versus Cross-City Christian Academy on Tuesday, September 26. The first match will start at 4:30 pm and the second will begin at 6:00 pm.

McKenzie Eagles Sports Report

McKenzie Valley Cross Country

Mr. West League rival Alsea last Tuesday, September 19. The Wolverines struggled in a confident, having lost only one match to Eddyville Charter, the current MRWL leader. And the Eagles weren’t able to thwart any of that swagger as Alsea rolled to the title with a 3-0 win over their young hosts. Set scores were 25-16, 25-10, and 25-9.

McKenzie took to the road on Thursday, September 21 with a win and 2-1 off with the fore-mentioned MWL leaders in a MWL double-header. The Eagles of Eddyville left no doubt that the McKenzie youths still have some court time to pay before they match up with the Eagles. Eddyville Charter claims the first set, 25-11, 25-4, and 25-6 and backed up the sweep with another 3-0 match win, 25-9, and 25-9. The losses put the McKenzie team at 1-6 in MWL play and 1-7 overall.

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McKenzie Eagles Cross Country

The McKenzie Eagle sophomore Meister set the tone, running the winning time of 16:41.54 minutes at the McKenzie Varsity Cross Country meet held at Chedalle Lake Park in Lebanon. The 5,000 meters race hosted by East Linn Lake Park in Lebanon. The 5,000 meters race hosted by East Linn Lake Park.

The recent McKenzie School Board District meeting illuminated a pressing issue: the critical need for qualified school bus drivers. Amidst the voices of concerned parents and educators, the board’s response highlighted a glaring gap in their approach. It’s essential to recognize that school board meetings are the proper place to address urgent matters like this one, impacting both our children’s education and the cohesiveness of our community.

Gare Garrels set the tone, warning that a lack of adequate driver recruitment and retention could severely impact students’ educational and extracurricular activities. He was not alone; Mark Dean explained on the financial angle, contrasting our district’s low compensation with other, more proactive districts. He took issue one step further, questioning the wisdom and community impact of resorting to hiring chartered buses from outside the area. These out-of-district drivers would be better quality, but they lack crucial local knowledge—of both the roads and the community they serve. Former McKenzie bus drivers were not equipped with our district’s cards, restricting vital communication lines between drivers and students.

Current and former school bus drivers, like John Phelps and Justin Barker, pointed to the relational aspect of their job. These drivers connect with students in a unique way, creating a community-centric circle of trust. The Board’s reluctance to address this issue underscores not just these relationships but also our children’s sense of belonging and safety.

The arguments went deep even further, covering exhausting schedules that contribute to driver burnout and adverse effects on the broader community. For instance, low compensation for school bus drivers can result in higher turnover rates, forcing families to adjust to new drivers frequently, and weakening the bonds of trust and familiarity. Additionally, reliance on chartered buses from outlying districts imposes an economic drain, as these services often come at a premium, pulling resources from other educational needs.

The McKenzie School Board is not the only McKenzie-based group trying to stay informed about the issues that matter most. While the McKenzie school board’s response highlighted a pressing issue, local newspapers are far from the only source of essential community concern. Whether you access the content from your local newspaper in print or online, remember that it is produced for you. And behind the articles, columns, and images your name appears accompanies the name of local residents who are committed to making your community stronger.

Join me in thanking your local newspaper – during National Newspaper Week – for the good work it does to keep your community informed.

Ken Rawles

Ken Rawles is the Technology Coordinator of the McKenzie Valley School District and an active member of the Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA).

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Suspicious Assault - 8200 blk, Marcola Rd./45000 blk, McK. Hwy.
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Sept. 19: 5:41 a.m: Assault - 40000 blk, Deerhorn Rd. Physical Dispute, Dispute between spouses. Female arrested for Assault.
6:22 a.m: Repossessed Vehicle - 39500 blk, McK. Hwy.
7:22 a.m: Welfare Check - 38500 blk, Wendling Rd.

Sept. 20: 7:55 a.m: Civil Service - 92100 blk, Marcola Rd.
9:44 a.m: Warrant Service - 43000 blk, McK. Hwy.
16:17 a.m: Assault - 94300 blk, Old Marcola Rd.
11:32 a.m: Foot Patrol - Marcola Rd. & Shotgun Creek Rd.
11:32 a.m: Vehicle Stop - Marcola Rd. & Shotgun Creek Rd.
5:57 p.m: Vehicle Stop - Taylor Rd. & McK. Hwy.
5:29 p.m: Suspicious Vehicle - 55600 blk, McK. River Dr. Driver of Unit #1 was unable to catch the license plate of the other vehicle. Driver of Unit #1 to drive into the ditch. The driver of Unit #1 was mostly unjured but advised he was going to get checked out at the hospital as a precaution. He was unable to catch the license plate of the other vehicle but described it as a “boxier” Jeep Cherokee with a light bar on top. Unit #1 was drivable and not towed from the scene. Involved; 38-year-old male.

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McKenzie Fire & Rescue

State Police Report
Sept. 24: 08:47: Crash. Non-Injury - Hwy. 126E, Milepost 23. OSP received a call regarding a single vehicle crash into the ditch. Upon arrival, the driver of Unit #1, a white Toyota 4Runner, was outside speaking with fire personnel. Trooper spoke with the driver who advised he was traveling eastbound and as he was rounding the corner, he observed a Jeep fully in his lane of travel. He said he veered into the oncoming lane to avoid a head on collision. When he did this, the Jeep began correcting back into the westbound lane and caused the Driver of Unit #1 to drive into the ditch. The driver of Unit #1 was mostly unjured but advised he was going to get checked out at the hospital as a precaution. He was unable to catch the license plate of the other vehicle but described it as a “boxier” Jeep Cherokee with a light bar on top. Unit #1 was drivable and not towed from the scene. Involved; 38-year-old male.

McKenzie River Reflections Page 3
Thursday, September 28, 2023

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Sheriff’s Report
Sept. 15: 11:26 a.m: Disturbance, Dispute - 38400 blk, Cartwright Creek Rd. Verbal dispute between caller and caller’s son.
2:05 p.m: Suspicious Conditions - 91800 blk, Mill Creek Rd. Two males were observed going through the trash at an area business.
Sept. 16: 3:52 p.m: Harassment - 92700 blk, Marcola Rd. Ongoing dispute between the caller and the caller’s adult son. Advised that the son came to the caller’s work and threw an egg at her car.
9:10 p.m: Suspicious Conditions - 88000 blk, Easy Ln. Area resident reported a drone was shining into the caller’s bedroom. He said he veered into the oncoming lane to avoid a head on collision. When he did this, the Jeep began correcting back into the westbound lane and caused the Driver of Unit #1 to drive into the ditch. The driver of Unit #1 was mostly unjured but advised he was going to get checked out at the hospital as a precaution. He was unable to catch the license plate of the other vehicle but described it as a “boxier” Jeep Cherokee with a light bar on top. Unit #1 was drivable and not towed from the scene. Involved; 38-year-old male.

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...saving stories from the rising tide of time.

Stripes may come back, but not downtown
River Reflections
Volume 6, Issue 30 March 23, 1984
Yellow lines down the middle of the McKenzie Highway have been a point of conflict since the Oregon Highway Division spent $4,780 last August to sandblast off several no-passing zones. Area residents protested their removal during a 6-Year Plan hearing in Eugene as well as at a special meeting with highway officials at Lebanon in December. However, according to James Gix, Region 3 area Highway Engineer in Roseburg, the stripes had to be removed to bring parts of the McKenzie into compliance with statewide rules for highway marking.

Some no-passing zones in Cedar Flat, Watzville, Lebanon, and Vida were changed from a double line to a dotted line in the compliance change. Some 25,000 linear feet - or nearly 4 miles - of double lines were removed. Yet the striping controversy continues with the federal government getting into the act. Last week the U.S. Department of Transportation informed the Oregon Highway Division that the state must stripe horizontal curves or face the prospect of losing federal aid construction funds. Yet the striping job would be minor. The kicker, though, lies in the county’s appraisal of residential use for the acreage. VanVactor says “We told them they could go ahead and complete the septic systems but the installation itself does not irrevocably commit that property to residential use.” According to Lane County’s maps to determine zoning, the Baxter Acres plot is considered forest land. Mike Farthing of the firm Husk, Gleaves, Swearingen, representing the company, says the new forest designation for the property came as a surprise. Farthing says the land was subdivided and plotted in an addition to the county in September 1982 approximating the 39 lots subject to zoning and building restrictions as they then existed. In its CPR request, Weyerhaeuser maintains that it already has 39 valid lots, which qualifies the property as committed lands rather than resource lands. Weyerhaeuser Real Estate spokesman Bob Shedd in Tacoma says his company is not seeking compensation from the county for the construction delays. He says Weyerhaeuser plans to sell the lots in 1984 and some are already gone. “We’re going ahead with our plans,” Shedd says, “everything so far has been a mix-up but should be straightened out.

Roadside flags part of a national study
River Reflections
Volume 6, Issue 43 June 28, 1984
With bright-colored flags sprouting like roadside flowers along some parts of the McKenzie Highway, it almost looks like summer has arrived. But instead of foiling big biostatic conditions, the flags represent a Cornell University-backed study probing esos-old forces still act ing some 20 to 30 miles below the earth’s surface. The McKenzie Valley this week became part of Cornell’s nationwide study of earthquake tectonics, an investigation of how continental and oceanic plates interact when they meet below the surface. Crops from the Petty-Ray Division of Geo-Source Inc. have been placing flags every tenth of a mile along the highway from milepost 44 east and along the Old McKenzie Hwy. to Rte 242. As well, eventually, they plan to take their testing as far as the City of Sisters in eastern Oregon.

Bill Cassidy, project manager for Petty-Ray, says that geophones are connected at such flag stations to a seismic cable running along the roadside. During the testing, five vibrator-equipped trucks are used to send test waves into the earth’s crust, traveling through different rock layers, return to the geophones, and are transferred to another computer-equipped truck for recording, Cassidy says. The Cornell study, titled the Consor tium for Continental Reflection Profiling, has seen crews working in several other states since the 1970’s. Investigations so far have been conducted in California, Utah, Georgia, Wyoming, and Tennessee. Cassidy says the Oregon phase of the project has con centrated on developing a series of lines from the coast, through the Willamette Valley, and over to Eola County depending on the weather, local testing could be over by July, he says.

Police pull pot plantation
River Reflections
Volume 6, Issue 50 August 10, 1984
Harvesting came a little sooner than planned on an yet-unnamed marijuana grower in the Blue River area. Oregon State Police and U.S. Forest Service officials report they pulled 37 plants on August 1st in the Blue River drainage. Consequently growing from 3 to 8 feet in height were estimated to be valued at $30,000. River Rovers were tipped off to the site by an informer and arrived on the scene to find the operation includ ing a number of gardening tools, as well as watering and fertiliz ing jugs. Those items were also seized in the raid which sent the crops to be burned at the Eugene Water and Electric Board’s boilers in Eugene. Blue River Ranger District officials say the matter is still under investigation and warn people conducting such operations that they may be facing more than legal charges. Other offenses include the destruction of natural resources and trespass, which carry penalties up to a $5000 fine and 6 months in jail.

New plans
Continued From Page 1
they left in the past had attracted smokers and drinkers “to sit there all day.” Becky Taylor, a senior Transpor tation Planner with Lane County Public Works says she’s working on scheduling another community meeting to discuss the plans. In the meantime, she can be reached at Becky.taylor@lanecountyor. gov or 541-682-6932.

Thank you to the subscribers and advertisers that support River Reflections’ mission to connect McKenzie area residents with local news, activities, accomplishments, and history.
Lawns languish in the heat of summer unless showered with the water they require to thrive. But not to worry, the grass isn’t dead. Care has taken the rains return, again grass greens up quickly, said Alec Kowalewski, turf specialist for Oregon State University’s Extension Service.

While letting your lawn go dormant in summer isn’t a bad thing — especially with concern about water shortages — lack of irrigation does allow weeds to gain a foothold, he said. And regular wear and tear can cause compaction within a lawn, which leads to brown or bare spots.

Now is a good time to whip your lawn back into shape, but starting over usually isn’t necessary.

“You should always try renovation before putting in a new lawn because it’s difficult to get a stand of grass established,” Kowalewski said. “So if you have something to begin with, go with renovating.”

What you have, to begin with, can vary from addressing a few brown spots to a desert of weeds to hardpan soil. Assess your lawn’s level of need and proceed with a regular renovation or a no-holds-barred one. Most often, a regular tune-up is all that’s needed.

Once you’ve got your lawn established, follow Kowalewski’s steps to a healthy lawn that will outcompete those pesky weeds: water, fertilize and mow properly.

Water 1 inch a week, but don’t do it all at once.

“If you look at the roots, the majority are in the top 1 inch of the soil,” he said. “The deeper you go, the fewer roots there are, so water more than a quarter inch at a time is a waste. So irrigate more frequently with less amounts when it’s not raining.”

Fertilize four times a year. An easy way to remember is to apply on Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, and Thanksgiving.

When it comes to mowing, never remove more than one-third of the grass at one time. That means if the lawn is 3 inches long, cut only 1 inch. Cutting more than one-third weakens the lawn, leaving it vulnerable to weeds and diseases. For most grasses, 2 inches is about the top range a homeowner will tolerate, but higher is even better.

“Increase the height of the grass as tall as you can stand it and mow once a week,” he said. “If you mow it to an inch, it’s horrible to look at. It’s very popular.”

Mow once a week in spring and fall, and less often during summer and winter months. Instead of bagging up clippings, consider leaving them where they fall. They break down quickly and resupply much-needed nitrogen.

The more often you mow, the easier this is to do. Don’t, however, leave clumps of clippings sitting on the lawn.

For more information, watch Kowalewski’s video Integrated Pest Management for Turfgrass. Or check out the following publications:

countries: Practical Lawn Establishment and Renovation, Practical Lawn Care for Western Oregon, Retail Lawns: Seed Mixtures for Western Oregon and Western Washington, and Fertilizing Lawns.

Kowalewski’s steps for renovating a lawn:

For regular renovation:

* Do a pH test. Take a sample with help from Extension’s Guide to Collecting Soil Samples for Farms and Gardens and send it to a soil lab, or buy a test kit at the nursery. Lawns grow well in a pH of 6 to 6.5.

* Remove weeds by hand or with a broad-spectrum herbicide.

* Aerate lawn with a machine available at rental shops. Pay particular attention to bare spots or compacted areas. Rake off plugs of soil removed by aerator.

* If the pH is on the low side (below 6.0), add lime. It’s common in western Oregon for lawns to need lime every two to three years.

* Fertilize with a product that has the correct nitrogen, potassium, and phosphorus, and a medium level of potassium. Check the fertilizer label and choose something with a high first number (N), a low second number (P), and a medium third number (K) such as 20-2-6.

You’ll get the best results using a rotary spreader.

* Overseed at the recommended rate, going a little thicker on really bare spots. Use a drop seeder for even distribution.

* Water daily unless it rains. For major renovation, do the above steps and add the follow:

  * Mow lawn as short as possible before getting started.

  * Before aeration, dethatch the lawn with a dethatching machine or power rake, which you can rent. The idea is to expose as much soil as possible. Run the machine across the lawn twice, in opposite directions. Remove the loosened thatch before changing direction.

  * After seeding, mulch with a thin layer of sawdust, bark dust or compost. A quarter inch is enough; don’t overload it or the seed will have a tough time germinating. To make the job easier, rent a wire drum roller.

In the Colorado Rockies, the aspen show a golden dress along the country roads. Sometimes a rancher taking his cattle from the high country to the ranch at a lower altitude even may delay this experience. You gave us even more time to view the golden countryside.

In Utah, there aren’t so many colorful tall trees. However, the bushes covering lower levels of the mountains provided us with a spectacular colorful views.

In Ohio, we visited relatives, we found more muted hues on the trees, but they were enjoyable just the same.

GRAPE NUT PUDDING - (an old fashioned recipe)

Beat 4 eggs well and add 1 qt. milk and 1-cup sugar. Stir well and then add 1 cup grape nuts. Pour into greased 1-1/2 qt. casserole dish. Bake at 350 degrees F for 1 hour or until knife inserted into center comes out clean.

(A friend often makes this when we have a potluck dinner and church. It’s very popular.)

(c) Mary Emma Allen

(Mary Emma Allen writes from her NH home. e-mail: me.allen@juno.com)
**October 3**

**Family Story Time**

From 10 to 11 a.m. at the Cump Creek Church Fellowship Hall, 37529 Upper Camp Creek Rd. Some special fun for children 5 and under (with their adults) to enjoy stories, singing, laughter, and friendship.

**October 3**

**Write Your Life**

The Leaburg Library is delighted to announce that Deane Noriyuki is back with a second “Write Your Life” workshop! This six-week memoir workshop will begin at 9 a.m. on Tuesday, August 22nd, and will run through Tuesday, September 26th. The program is free and will meet in the library’s Annex Room.

To sign up, please contact the Library Director, Marty Mealey, at 541-896-3817, or stop in at the library. We’re right next to the McKenzie Fire and Rescue building in Leaburg.

**October 4**

**EWEB board meeting**

Customers and the general public are welcome and encouraged to attend in person or watch a live stream of the meeting at 6:30 pm on Tuesday, August 22nd, at https://tinyurl.com/4y36kcv. EWEB-BotBoard-Meeting-08-01-23. Commissioners hold regularly scheduled public meetings on the first Tuesday of each month at EWEB’s Roosevelt Operations Center, 4200 Roosevelt Blvd., Eugene, typically starting at 5:30 p.m. Customers and the general public are welcome and encouraged to attend. An interpreter can be provided with 48 hours notice prior to the meeting. To arrange for this service, call 541-685-7000.

**October 3**

**Boone meeting**

County Board of Commissioners meeting begins at 9 a.m. in Harris Hall, unless otherwise noted on the published agenda. Regular Board Meetings are scheduled for Tuesday. Wednesday Board meetings are on an as needed basis.

**October 21**

**Learn CPR & defibrillator use**

A CPR and Defibrillator Use class will be held on October 21 at the McKenzie Fire & Rescue in Leaburg. The class starts at 9 a.m., will likely require 4-5 hours, and will cost $30 (includes Heart Association certificate). There are 9 spaces left. Interested? Call Clayton at McKenzie Fire & Res: 541-822-1431.

**October 4**

**Blue River Water Board**

The board will meet at 6 p.m. A link to the online meeting is available at: blueriverpark.com.

**October 4**

**Blue River Park Board**

The board will meet at 6 p.m.

**O’Brien Memorial Library**

The O’Brien Memorial Library has received grant awards from the Keane Family Fund of Oregon Community Foundation for $10,000 and the John and Mary Jane Dellenback Community Benefit Fund of Oregon Community Foundation for $5,000 to serve the community. These grants will allow the library to continue to serve the public.

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I am concerned about a relationship, but it is not my own. My nephew aged 21 is planning to get married this November. While I think he is young, I think the bride is far too young at only 17.

My nephew was home-schooled through half of high school, and she was raised on a ranch and home-schooled as well. In other words, she has no real life experience. They have never dated anyone else. To top it off, he is financially irresponsible and currently holds a low paying job, while she has never worked.

Her mother is strongly in support of the marriage and is encouraging it, even though her daughter hasn’t finished high school. His entire family is against it. None of us feel either of them know themselves well enough to commit to another, or know enough of the big bad world.

How do I discourage them from getting married so soon, or should I? All of us prefer to see him wait until he has a more mature and stable position, or at least an idea where he wants to go in life, before they walk into a marriage they may later regret.

On one level I suspect the reason they are in a hurry is because they were both raised in a strict environment and don’t believe in premarital sex. That’s just a conjecture on my part, but if they marry, they’ll end up divorced in under four years.

So should I keep my mouth shut, or talk them out of getting married?

Bea

Bea, with all the relationship books and counseling available in the US, you might think the leveling off of the matrimonial divorce rate is due to some new technique or discovery. It isn’t.

The evidence seems to show the level off is one main factor is that Couples getting married are now on average about four years older than when they were only a few decades ago, and they are about a dozen years older than this couple. You are right to be concerned.

You are writing from experience, and they are acting from inexperience. It is wise to point out to them what married life requires and mention things they haven’t thought about. But if they didn’t absorb those lessons growing up, chances are they won’t know what to do with them, their lives, they won’t say that.

After the wedding the question is, Will help really help them, or are we both asking a marriage destined to end?

Say what you think is appropriate. On the other hand, only in hindsight are you likely to be appreciated.

Wayne & Tamara

On The Road

My significant other and soon to be husband came up the side road leaving in two weeks to drive cross-country, a trip of almost 3000 miles. I was curious as to how we would spend hour after hour driving with one another?

The party not driving can read the book or do this or that, or listen to music. I’ll pack snacks and we can take turns sleeping. These are just a few of the common everyday things people do when they travel together.

I suppose I was looking for something else that they wouldn’t know exactly. Any suggestions?

Kris

Kris, what are you asking?

Life is one long road trip. If the silence is too long, I wonder what you say, perhaps that says it all. This trip may reveal the real nature of your connection. Tamara and I can drive in companionable silence, or we can talk for hours. We don’t even turn the radio on. It’s a distraction from it. Is that what you are looking for?

Wayne

Wayne & Tamara are the authors of The Young Woman’s Guide To Old Men & Choosing in a Nutshell—available from Amazon, Apple, and bookstores everywhere.

American Life in Poetry

The Poetry Foundation is now providing a Poem of the Day.

Dame Russe

By William Carlos Williams

If when my wife is sleeping and my baby is sleeping

and the sun is a flame-white
dust in silken mists
above shining trees,

I in my north room
dance naked, grotesquely

before my mirror
waving my shirt round my head

and singing softly to myself:

“I am lonely, lonely.

I was born to be lonely,

I am best sor!”

If I admire my arms, my face, my shoulders, flanks, buttocks against the yellow drawn shades, —

Who shall say I am not the happiest of my household?

With Ezra Pound and H.D., Williams was a leading poet of the Imagist movement and often wrote about American people and his own ebullient imagination to create a distinctly American verse. Often domestic in focus and “unsentimental in sympathy, its muscular and emotional identification with its subject.” It was the type of poetry that Williams also characterized himself:

“There is no optimistic blindness in Williams,” wrote Randell Jazeera of American subjects and themes. Though his career was initially overshadowed by other poets, he became an inspiration to the Beat generation in the 1950s and 60s. He was known as an experimenter, an innovator, a revolutionary figure in American poetry. Yet in comparison to artists of his own time who sought new form and structure as expatriates in Europe, Williams lived a remarkably conventional career.

ODFW Recreation Report

Keeps dogs away from salmon carcasses

When it’s spouting out salmon or dead fish placed for stream enrichment, letting your dog eat or lick salmon carcasses can have dire consequences. Salmon poisoning is caused when dogs eat a salmon carcass infected with an organism in the blood called Neodrisseliella helminthoeca. Symptoms include severe vomiting and diarrhea. Fortunately, treatment most dogs will survive this potentially fatal infection.

October 6 last day to apply for weekend fishing

If you’re hoping to bag a bear while hunting this fall, Friday, Oct. 6 is the last day to buy a full bear tag. Sport Packer holders, don’t forget to redeem your voucher.

Best bets for weekend fishing

This could be a beautiful weekend for fishing. Here are just some of your options.

Chinook and coho salmon are entering rivers from the coast to the Willamette Valley.

This could be the best time of the year to fish the high lakes for trout. Fish are feeding heavily in preparation for the winter, and fishing should be good until snow limits access.

Brook and brown trout are starting to gather up in preparation for spawning.

Crabbing has been good to great out of Cape Bay, Newport and Waldport.

E-tagging tips for hunters and anglers

It’s important for both hunters and anglers to tag their harvest immediately, which means they’ll need to have the MyODFW app or buy a MyODFW license at a counter before running out of cell phone range. Here are some tips for tagging:

**CPU Chip**

CWD check stations, other ways to get your animal tested

ODFW continues to monitor hunter harvested deer and elk for CWD – a fatal, highly infectious disease. What can hunters do to help combat CWD?

* If you pass a CWD check station, stop and have your animal tested.
* Birds and small mammals: (10 minutes and is legally required)
* If you don’t find a check station, learn the other ways you can help for its eradication.

Find out more about CWD, check station locations and the ways to have your animal tested.
**ACROSS**

1. Interest in a venture  
6. Hundredweight, acr.  
9. Med. sch. requirement  
13. the tail ___ the donkey  
15. All plants and animals  
16. Part of an eye, pl.  
17. Go for the bull's eye  
18. Reduction/oxidation portmanteau  
19. *Best selling author of the 2000s*  
21. *Billboard's music artist of the 2000s*  
23. Chicken ___ ___ king  
24. From a thrift store  
25. *Name for 2000s*  
28. Formerly, once  
30. *Frodo Baggins and Samwise Gamgee or Nemo and Dory,* e.g.  
31. Rich soil  
32. China grass  
33. Handy  
34. 1,000 kilograms  
35. Play a part (2 words)  
36. 5,280 feet  
37. Dignified manner  
38. Made a basket  
40. *Like "something new" boutique*  
43. Arabian chieftain  
44. Apartments, e.g.  
45. "Friend or Facebook," e.g.  
46. Metal detector, e.g.  
47. 5,280 feet  
48. Goose egg  
49. "'__' Smart" (2008)  
51. A-bomb particle  
52. Levy  
53. "Like something new" boutique  
54. Beginning of sleeping disorder  
55. Put to work  
56. *Like 'something new' boutique*  
57. Made a basket  
58. Reducing/oxidation portmanteau  
59. Averse  
60. "The Da Vinci ___" best selling book of the 2000s  
61. Coffee with the locals  
62. Lyons  
63. "Peace" with fingers  
64. "Like something new" boutique  
65. "He's Just Not That ___ You" (2009)  
66. Averse  
68. Rich soil  
69. MB. sch. requirement  
70. Made a basket  
71. "Billboard's music artist of the 2000s"  
72. “Basketball” song  
73. Handy

**DOWN**

1. Horse prod  
2. "Popular DVR device"  
3. All over again  
4. Eucalyptus-eating marsupial  
5. Store in a silo  
6. Mountain goat terrain  
7. "Xbox competitor"  
8. Library fulfill  
9. 2002-2004 epidemic  
11. A-bomb particle  
12. "Like something new" boutique  
13. Beginning of sleeping disorder  
14. Put to work  
15. Lyons  
16. "Peace" with fingers  
17. Made a basket  
18. "Like something new" boutique  
19. Averse  
20. Lyons  
21. "Like something new" boutique  
22. Lyons  
23. "Peace" with fingers  
24. Made a basket  
25. *Like "something new" boutique*  
26. Lyons  
27. "Like something new" boutique  
28. Lyons  
29. "Like something new" boutique  
30. Lyons  
31. "Like something new" boutique  
32. Lyons  
33. "Like something new" boutique  
34. "Like something new" boutique  
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69. Lyons  
70. Lyons  
71. Lyons  
72. Lyons  
73. Lyons

**SUDOKU**

Fill in the blank squares in the grid, making sure that every row, column and 3-by-3 box includes all digits 1 through 9.

**Solution on Page 9**

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**THE 2000s**

1. Interest in a venture  
6. Hundredweight, acr.  
9. Med. sch. requirement  
13. the tail ___ the donkey  
15. All plants and animals  
16. Part of an eye, pl.  
17. Go for the bull's eye  
18. Reduction/oxidation portmanteau  
19. *Best selling author of the 2000s*  
21. *Billboard's music artist of the 2000s*  
23. Chicken ___ ___ king  
24. From a thrift store  
25. *Name for 2000s*  
28. Formerly, once  
30. *Frodo Baggins and Samwise Gamgee or Nemo and Dory,* e.g.  
31. Rich soil  
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34. 1,000 kilograms  
35. Play a part (2 words)  
36. 5,280 feet  
37. Dignified manner  
38. Made a basket  
40. "Like something new" boutique  
41. 2002-2004 epidemic cause, acr.  
43. Arabian chieftain  
44. Apartments, e.g.  
46. "Friend or Facebook," e.g.  
47. 5,280 feet  
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55. Put to work  
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62. Lyons  
63. "Like something new" boutique  
64. Lyons  
65. Lyons  
66. Lyons  
67. Lyons  
68. Lyons  
69. MB. sch. requirement  
70. Made a basket  
71. "Xbox competitor"  
72. “Basketball” song  
73. Handy

---

**Solution on Page 9**
An invasive insect from Europe and the Middle East that attacks oak trees has recently been found in several Oregon white oaks in Wilsonville. The Mediterranean oak borer (Xyloxylenus monograpsus) transmits multiple fungal species to the trees it attacks. Some fungal species may cause a disease called oak wilt, which may kill oak trees in as little as two to three years.

Mediterranean oak borer (MOB) is a tiny woodboring bee called an "ambrosia beetle" because it is attracted to feeding on wood, eats fungus growing in galleries created in the wood of branches and trunks. The fungus grows, robbing tree canopies of water necessary for growth and survival. This insect was first found in North America when it turned up in 2017 in California, where it has been reported from elm, maple, and walnut trees, although damaging attacks have not been reported for these other tree types.

Oregon Dept. of Forestry (ODF) Invasive Species Specialist Wyatt Williams said, "MOB was found to the trees at ODF in Multnomah County Oregon in 2018. It was then found in traps in 2020 in Marion County, and in 2021-2022 in Clackamas and Washington Counties. This spring it was found in a single Oregon whitetree at Sandy River Delta.

Cody Holthouse, IPPM Program Manager for the Oregon Dept. of Agriculture, said his agency and ODF have been in touch with their California counterparts to assess the impact of MOB on native and introduced oaks, while also exploring what control measures they recommend. "Scientists from both agencies have been working on the development of effective monitoring and management strategies for this pest. We expect to have more answers in coming weeks and months," he said.

In the meantime, the departments of Forestry and Agriculture are asking people not to move firewood from oak trees beyond the local area where it is cut, to avoid spreading the insect pest.

Landowners are asked to review the signs and symptoms of MOB below and report oaks with both crown dieback and any of the symptoms below to the Oregon Invasives Hotline at https://oregoninvasiveshotline.org/login/?next=/reports/detail/2018.

MOB fact sheet: https://tinyurl.com/MOB-oregon
Don’t Move Firewood to prevent spreading this and other pests: https://www.dontmovefirewood.org/map/or.png
Signs and symptoms of MOB infestation:
1) MOB is a tiny reddish-brown beetle that can be confused with many other beetles that reside in oak.
2) Pale boring dust is kicked out by the beetle and found on the exterior trunk of the tree.
3) MOB galleries look like tiny black holes from the exterior of the wood and:
4) Black, branched tunnels on the cut face of wood.
5) MOB create tiny, perfectly round entrance holes.

Symptoms not from MOB: holes larger than the diameter of a pencil lead, brown boring dust, discarded leaves but absence of dieback, wood staining without associated galleries. For more info on other oak pests go to: https://www.oregon.gov/odf/Documents/forestenvironment/Oak_galls_2017.pdf
Shane Eldor Sprenger, 47, of Blue River went missing in November 2021. According to a March 31, 2022, episode of The Vanished podcast, Shane Sprenger disappeared on Nov. 2, 2021. “Shane Sprenger disappeared from the scene, but LCSO has denied making those remarks. Officially, LCSO has said that Reiley — who was working at a job site, but LCSO's Sgt. Tom Speldrich says, “We don't have any reason to believe that there is foul play involved, but we also are still looking for that.”

Without pointing fingers at any vehicle and nobody has heard from vehicle had a flat tire and the gas tank was empty.” The contents of Bramel’s walk were laid out on the dash board. The Charley Project says, “The Charley Project, in early May 2007, “the vehicle was found five miles up Quartz Creek Road near Vida along with his cellphone and other belongings.”

Few details about his disappearance are available, but public records suggest he has a history of substance abuse and associated legal problems.

Eric Ray Brazel, 34, of Springfield has been missing since March 2, 2021. He disappeared after “he drove away from his home in a paranoid state” and may have triggered a search effort due to a mental health crisis, according to a March 30 KVAL News story. Brazil was working as an assistant apartment manager at the time of his disappearance.

Brazil’s friends report he became obsessed with Russia’s invasion of Ukraine prior to his disappearance, and seemed to be taking it too far to serve the area for his safety. Despite attempts by friends to calm him down, he frantically drove away in his vehicle, which was located days later in a treacherous, remote area near Vida. His phone was located near his vehicle and nobody has heard from him since his disappearance.

Chasyon Eugene Robertson Rebekah Noel Bramel, 26, of Portland was missing since April 30, 2007. Family and friends report she was having a mental health crisis at the time she disappeared and may have been suicidal.

According to The Charley Project, in early May 2007, “she vehicle’s driver from a friend was found five miles up Quartz Creek Road between Deerdorn and Goodpasture Roads, in a rural area east of Springfield. The vehicle had a flat tire and the gas tank was empty.” The contents of Bramel’s walker were laid out on the dash board. The Charley Project says, “The vehicle had a flat tire and the gas tank was empty.”

My personal opinion is that every case mentioned above, other than Xu’s, involves mental illness and/or substance abuse. Lack of treatment, including alcohol and addiction, along with homelessness, are the biggest issues facing this population according to an April 17, 2020, article by Molly Harburger in The Oregonian, “Oregon’s chronically underfunded mental health system is nearly universally accepted as being broken. It ranks at or near the bottom on many national metrics.” Until that changes, Oregonians can only expect more tragedies involving those suffering from mental illness and substance dependency.

This article first appeared in the September 14th issue of the Eugene Weekly. Brenton Gicker is a registered nurse in Eugene who has worked for Portland Public Health services for most of his adult life. He began writing stories about missing people in 2018. He can be reached at outreach@mydealwithyou.com. More information on these cases can be found on the Charley Project at charleyproject.org and from the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System at namus.usi.jfj.gov.
This month, thousands of Oregon households will be invited to participate in the first wave of a statewide transportation study. The Oregon Travel Study, led by a partnership between the Oregon Department of Transportation and the eight Oregon Metropolitan Planning organizations, seeks to understand where, when and how people in Oregon travel in their daily lives.

Between September 2023 and June 2024, about half of Oregon’s 1.6 million households will receive invitations by mail to participate in the study. It’s conducted every 10 years and provides critical data for transportation policy decisions and investments at local, state, and federal levels.

“One of the decisions we make rely on data from this study,” said Becky Knudson, ODOT’s senior transportation economist. “The more Oregon transportation agencies understand about how and why people use their local systems, the better we can make informed decisions to meet their needs.”

Households were randomly selected using U.S. Postal Service data. Selected households can participate in the survey via a smartphone app, online, or over the phone. The goal is to collect travel information from at least 21,000 households, which will allow analysts to draw accurate insights from the data across the entire state.

Households who participate in the study will be compensated for their time via prepaid debit cards. Transportation planners and policymakers will use the collected data over the next 10 years to create a safer, more sustainable and equitable transportation system for all users throughout the state. Results are expected to be published in early 2025.

Knudson says ensuring collected data represents all people in Oregon, and all the different ways they travel, is a top priority. Here’s some parts of the process:

• There are three ways to report travel: smartphone app, via a website, or over the phone.
• The survey is available in multiple languages across the smartphone app, website and phone line, including English, Spanish, Russian, Vietnamese, and simplified and traditional Chinese.

• Study researchers are partnering with community-based organizations to reach disadvantaged communities in ways that work best for those communities.

• Some communities and mode users will be “oversampled,” meaning more invitations will be sent to those folks to ensure we achieve the needed response rate.

Learn more about the study at oregontravelstudy.com, which includes a detailed FAQ about how it works.

News from the VMCC

Import bus drivers?

Becca Short was part of the team that built a tiny home in the McKenzie Community School District’s program last year. In its first year of operation, 190 students participated in building the firststarter homes while gaining experience in construction trades, certification, advancement and opportunities to create apprenticeship programs, Quinn said.

The program's first instructors to build the one-room shelters so they lead construction classes. With what they learn in those classes teens can be part of a workforce initiative that introduces young people to the multiple career paths in high-wage/high-demand construction trades work. It also provides them with hands-on, work-based learning opportunities to demonstrate and refine the skills they’ll need for possible future employment.

On the ground, Gabe Piecho-wicz, the lead at Everyone Village, said he “realized that what we have here is the makings of a tide-turner. For so many years what we have here is the makings possible future employment.

In the second year of operation, the program is expanding to expand into grow from 16 to 19 building sites, including middle schools, involving more students. Materials to build the tiny homes range from around $5,700 for an 8 ft. x 12-foot structure to around $7,000 for an 8 x 16-foot home. Those funds come from donations, which can be made via the Lane Workforce website.

Besides Everyone Village, homes are also being installed at the SquareOne Village.

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