McKenzie River Reflections

Delivering targeted news for Oregon's McKenzie River communities since 1978

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Volume 49, Issue 14



Crystal Cave?

There's one particular cave — one that may actually not exist, but probably does

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Winter Feeding

As winter approaches, backyard birds benefit from quality feeders

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LOCAL NEWS

Eleven Businesses Receive $1.68 Million in Grants

Disaster recovery funds aim to help replace equipment, cover operating expenses and strengthen local economy

"The funds available were a mere fraction of what we really need in recovery from massive mega fire," was East Lane County Commissioner Heather Buch's take on awardinge grants to eleven area businesses hit by the 2020 Holiday Farm Fire. "Two million dollara doesn't cut it," she told board members at their November 17 meeting.

Officials say the Holiday Farm Fire Small Business Recovery Fund was designed to provide grants to businesses that sustained property damage or financial losses in the wildfire.

Equipment replacement, operating expenses, employee payroll, inventory and other business-related costs are among issues targeted.

At the meeting, Lane County disaster recovery manager Matt McRae called small businesses the lifeblood of communities, noting that this holds especially true in the McKenzie River Valley. According to McRae, attention after major disasters tends to settle naturally on rebuilding homes, yet restoring local businesses matters just as much to the long-term economic health of affected communities.

He added that Lane County partnered with Community LendingWorks and the McKenzie Valley Long Term Recovery Group (MVLTRG) to reach out to businesses and encouraged them to apply.



From agricultural equipment to cooking supplies, area businesses are receiving help to recover from a six-year old wildfire.

Grant applications from eleven businesses across the Holiday Farm Fire area were approved, totalling $1,675,683.

They included:

McKenzie River Mountain Resort - Portable commercial facilities, operating expenses, vehicle - $200,000.

Wayfarer Resort - Furniture, operating costs, payroll, advertising, landscaping, supplies and equipment - $200,000.

Ron Short Construction - Equipment, personnel - $199,921.

Rodakowski Farms Inc. - Equipment - $196,460.

George Kruse - Excavation Equipment - $195,000.

McKenzie River Fishing Guides and Rafting Tours - Vehicle, watercraft, personnel - $188,897.

Goodpasture Farms LLC - Equipment - $179,762.

Magyar Property Management and Investment LLC - Vehicle, equipment, personnel - $126,476.

Azul, A Venue for Art - Food truck, art, payroll - $83,167.

Indigo Café - Vehicle, cooking equipment, inventory, operating expenses - $65,000.

Kruton's Carpentry LLC - Storage facilities, cargo trailer, tools - $41,000.

Because the grants, unlike loans, require no repayment, recipients can put the money directly into rebuilding their businesses without taking on additional debt.

Funding for the program came through the Community Development Block Grant–Disaster Recovery program of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

McRae said the county contracted with the McKenzie Valley Long Term Recovery Group to reach out to businesses in the fire-affected area, and accepted applications online from January 1 through February 27.

Coverage in McKenzie River Reflections included a December 18, 2025 article titled "Grants Aimed at Rebuilding Businesses," along with announcements in the January 29 and February 5,editions.

The program was also promoted in the county's January McKenzie Rebuilds newsletter, along with flyers posted at businesses from Leaburg to McKenzie Bridge, he noted.

MVLTRG staff also reached out to business ownersl, drawing on information gathered through the county's earlier post-fire business needs assessments.

Qualifying applicants had to show that their businesses were operating before the September

Business Grants - P 12

Briefs...

CHOIR CAROLS



The Eugene Concert Choir & Orchestra will present three major choral works and a program of traditional Christmas carols during its annual holiday concert Sunday, December 6, at 2:30 p.m. in Silva Concert Hall at Eugene's Hult Center for the Performing Arts

Carols - Page 2

FREE FISHING



Oregonians looking to escape the holiday shopping crowds can enjoy free fishing, crabbing and clamming on Friday and Saturday, November 27–28, as part of the Oregon Department of Fish

Fishing - Page 2

X-MAS PARADE



Springfield's 74th Annual Christmas Parade, known as Oregon's "Oldest and Coldest" parade, will return Saturday, Decem-

Parade - Page 2

Who made a difference in 2026?



McKenzie River Reflections is inviting people to submit nominations for its annual Man, Woman and Business of the Year awards. The honors go to individuals and businesses whose contributions have helped make the McKenzie community a better place to live, work and visit.

A nominee could be a volunteer, a community leader, an educator, a first responder, a business owner or a neighbor who quietly lends a helping hand.

For businesses, recognition may come for outstanding service, community involvement, support of local organizations or contributions to the valley's economic vitality.

Efforts that often go unnoticed deserve acknowledgment through this annual recognition, and so do those who have taken leadership roles in addressing community needs.

Cliff Richardson was named Man of the Year, Mary Ellen Wheeler Woman of the Year and Dale Turnley Construction Business of the Year when last year's honorees were announced in January of 2026. Each was recognized in part for contributing to the valley's ongoing recovery from the 2020 Holiday Farm Fire.

Nominations should identify your choice in each category and include a brief explanation of why the individual or business deserves recognition. Specific examples of community service and accomplishments are encouraged.

Please take a few moments to recognize someone who has made a difference this past year. Your nomination can help shine a spotlight on the people and businesses that make the McKenzie River Valley a special place to call home.

Send your nominations (with text and a favorite photo) to rivref2@gmail.com

Lane County Seeks Public Input on Future Parks Investments

Lane County Parks is asking residents to help shape the future of the county's park system through two virtual community meetings and an online survey. Public feedback, officials say, will help determine priorities for future park improvements and could influence a potential renewal of the county's Parks Levy.

Voters approved the five-year Parks Levy in 2022, which provided funding for park maintenance, facility upgrades, expanded recreational opportunities and improvements to natural areas.

Since then, Lane County Parks has completed dozens of projects throughout the county, including recent improvements at Mount Pisgah, Armitage Park and the North Jetty.

"The Parks Levy has allowed us to make significant improvements throughout the county park system," said Brett Henry, Lane County Parks Division Manager. "As we look ahead, we want to hear from the community about the opportunities and priorities that matter most to them."

Two virtual public meetings are scheduled for Tuesday, December 8, from 10 to 11 a.m., and Thursday, December 10, from 6 to 7 p.m. Participants will learn about completed projects and have an opportunity to suggest priorities for future investments.

A list of projects funded by the current Parks Levy is available on the county's online project map, tinyurl.com/nh7p5aa5



In 2024, Lane County Parks installed a new pickleball court at Deerhorn Park. The pickleball court repurposes an aging and underutilized basketball court to provide a popular sport in this McKenzie River community.

Letters to the Editor

We Must Overcome Hatred

Hatred expressed towards minorities and other groups in the United States is not a phenomenon of the twenty first century.

White settlers killed and subjugated Native Americans as they moved westward, and Native American children were taken from their parents and placed in boarding schools to be indoctrinated into White Society. Irish Catholics were discriminated against when they migrated to the U.S. Chinese laborers were reviled and persecuted during the construction of western railroads. Italian Americans have been accused of being mobsters. Japanese Americans were incarcerated in detention camps during WWII. German Americans have been accused of being Nazi sympathizers. Muslim Americans were persecuted after 9/11. Asian Americans were attacked after the onset of the pandemic. Latino Americans, Muslim Americans, Jewish Americans, Black Americans and the LGBTQ community have experienced hatred, persecution, discrimination and attacks. Some minorities, e.g. Asians, Indians (from India), Jews, Nigerians and others experience hatred because they are successful in life, and the haters are jealous of the minorities' accomplishments.

The haters typically are failures in some aspects of their lives, e.g. bad grades in school, unstable family life, inability to socialize with others, sexual performance problems, broken marriages, bouncing from job to job, and significant financial difficulties.

Americans who believe in our democracy have to step up and put down the hatred and violence perpetrated by the haters. The un-American inciters of violence are a threat to our values, and their hatred can get in the way of rational thinking.

Donald Moskowitz
Londonderry NH



Guest Opinion

Find the tax cheats to fund Oregon's families

***Shrinking the tax gap should be a key priority for lawmakers** in the upcoming session, as it would allow the state to better fund key services without raising anyone's taxes.*

By Daniel Hauser

For years, James "JW" Millegan lived high on the hog. The former securities broker from McMinnville spent lavishly on houses and a fleet of Rolls-Royces and Bentleys. Millegan funded his extravagant lifestyle in part through tax evasion. His luck ran out in 2023, when a federal judge sentenced him to 51 months in prison and ordered him to repay the IRS more than $2.5 million.

Although Millegan was caught, most people like him aren't. Sadly, the agencies charged with catching them are too thinly staffed.

With Oregon facing a difficult long-term financial picture, it would be smart for lawmakers to put a few extra resources into making sure taxes owed are paid. Oregon can generate a lot of revenue not by raising anyone's taxes, but simply by better enforcing the existing tax laws.

Investing in tax auditors, enforcement, and collections targeting high-income earners and large corporations can recoup many times the cost, a new report by the Oregon Center for Public Policy shows. We estimated, conservatively, that the state could net about $270 million each year by spending $54 million more annually on tax auditing, enforcement and collections.

Most of the taxes owed that

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Briefs...

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CAROLS

The Gloria! A Holiday Celebration concert will feature soprano soloist Camille Ortiz under the direction of Artistic Director and Conductor Diane Retallack.

The program includes John Rutter's Gloria, featuring orchestral brass fanfares; Franz Schubert's Mass in G, and Robert Shaw's The Many Moods of Christmas, Suite One, featuring arrangements of familiar carols including Silent Night, Patapan and O Come, All Ye Faithful.

Pre-concert festivities will take place from 1:30 to 2 p.m. in the Hult Center lobby, where the Oregon Tuba Ensemble will perform seasonal music and lead carol sing-alongs. Complimentary Christmas cookies and hot peppermint tea will also be available.

FISHING

and Wildlife's Free Fishing Weekend.

Both residents and nonresidents can fish and harvest shellfish without purchasing licenses, tags or endorsements during the two-day event. All other fishing regulations, including bag limits, size restrictions and seasonal closures, remain in effect.

Several Willamette Valley ponds, including Henry Hagg Lake, are scheduled to receive trout stockings. Anglers can also take advantage of early winter steelhead fishing opportunities.

Along the Oregon coast, crabbing from docks and in bays remains open, with winter typically producing some of the highest-quality Dungeness crab.

For fishing regulations, trout stocking schedules and current conditions, visit MyODFW.com..

PARADE

ber 5, bringing holiday floats, music and festivities to the streets of Springfield.

The parade will run from 1 to 4 p.m., will begin at 21st and Olympic streets, travel along Olympic Street to Mohawk Boulevard, continue south along Mohawk Boulevard and 14th Street, then turn west onto Main Street before concluding at Pioneer Parkway in downtown Springfield.

This marks the 10th year the Oregon Riders Society (ORS) has organized the parade. The motorcycle riding organization also supports charitable efforts benefiting children and families in need throughout Lane County.

Watch for temporary parking restrictions along Main Street, Mohawk Boulevard and connecting streets.

McKenzie Eagles Sports Report



By Cliff Richardson

McKenzie Varsity Sports Schedule This Week

There are no current McKenzie Varsity contests scheduled. The first basketball games of the Winter Season will tip-off on Wednesday, December 2, with Glendale traveling to McKenzie for a Boys Junior Varsity game at 4:30 pm, a Girls Varsity game at 5:30 pm and a Boys Varsity game at 7:00 pm.

Eagles Earn All League Honors

Four McKenzie Football student/athletes earned 2026 Special District 3 Football All League Awards this Fall. Selected by SD-3 Coaches, Eagle junior Jacob Norlund earned a SD-3 Second Team All-League award as a Defensive Lineman. Selected to the SD-3 Honorable Mention All-League team were senior Rhys Hamlow, as a Running Back, Linebacker, and Punter/Kicker, senior Hayden Kumle as a Quarterback, and sophomore Fen Willis as an Offensive Lineman, Wide Receiver and Tight End.

Elkton Cruises To State Championship, Defeats Crow 35-18

Elk's Talon Harvey Scores Three Touchdowns

Oregon's top ranked Class 1A

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Weather Report

READINGS TAKEN AT THE US ARMY CORPS COUGAR DAM

Date	High	Low	Rain	Releases
11/17	49	40	0.01	370 cfs
11/18	46	40	0.01	NA
11/19	46	33	0	309 cfs
11/20	47	34	0	304 cfs
11/21	40	29	1.19	300 cfs
11/22	45	37	0.12	NA
11/23	50	35	0	300 cfs

READINGS TAKEN AT EWEB LEABURG POWERHOUSE

Date	High	Low	Rain	Riverflow
11/17	51	40	0.40	1,880 cfs
11/18	52	39	0.18	1,977 cfs
11/19	50	31	0.03	1,580 cfs
11/20	42	32	0	1,580 cfs
11/21	51	31	0.02	1,550 cfs
11/22	48	37	0.16	1,580 cfs
11/23	49	34	0	1,550 cfs

Weather Forecast

Friday 11/27

McKenzie Valley: Rain, 80% chance precip, High: 45 Low: 54
Santiam Pass: Showers, 20% chance precip, High: 55 Low: 36

Saturday 11/28

McKenzie Valley: AM Showers, 70% chance precip, High: 52 Low: 37
Santiam Pass: Partly Cloudy, 10% chance precip, High: 58 Low: 41

Sunday 11/29

McKenzie Valley: Showers, 70% chance precip, High: 52 Low: 39
Santiam Pass: Showers, 50% chance precip, High: 48 Low: 32

SHERIFF'S REPORT

Lane County Sheriff's Office

Nov. 17: 8:21 a.m: Down Line - Deerhorn Rd.

9:33 a.m: Information - 90700 blk, Fish Hatchery Rd.

11:55 a.m: Subpoena Service - 89500 blk, Old Mohawk Rd.

12:23 p.m: Stalking Order Service - 44100 blk, McK. Hwy.

2:04 p.m: Theft of Mail - 90700 blk, Sunderman Rd.

3:03 p.m: Disorderly Subject - 88600 blk, Whitsell Ln.

3:21 p.m: Suspicious Conditions - 39300 blk, Walterville Ln.

Nov. 18: 12:51 a.m: Suspicious Conditions - 89800 blk, Greenwood Dr. Caller reported hearing what sounded like a person pounding on things outside her residence. The caller did not believe it was an animal. Eventually the caller looked outside and did not see anything and the noise stopped. Call was cleared welfare check.

9:18 a.m: Shots Fired - 40900 blk, Deerhorn Rd.

9:28 a.m: Lockout - 8000 blk, McK. Hwy.

9:56 a.m: Motor Vehicle Accident, No Injury - Deerhorn Rd.

10:19 a.m: Lockout - 38400 blk, Emerald Way.

7:49 p.m: Reckless Driving - 40500 blk, McK. Hwy.

Nov. 19: 7:05 a.m: Civil Problem - 38900 blk, Camp Creek Rd.

1:20 p.m: Subpoena Service - 89500 blk, Old Mohawk Rd.

12:13 p.m: Subpoena Service - 92000 blk, Marcola Rd.

1:49 p.m: Civil Service - 90900 blk, Angels Flight Rd.

5:26 p.m: Incomplete 911 Call - 38400 blk, Shotgun Creek Rd.

9:50 p.m: Burglary - 91000 blk, Hill Rd. Caller reported they were a neighbor and were keeping an eye on the nearby property. The caller believed they could see someone inside the house with a flashlight. Deputies responded with OSP and cleared the location. No one was found and deputies contacted the property owners. Cleared patrol check.

Nov. 20: 9:22 p.m: Information - 43300 blk, McK. Hwy.

2:48 p.m: Suspicious Vehicle - 93100 blk, Paschelke Rd.

Nov. 20: 2:16 p.m: Suspicious Vehicle - Seeley Creek Rd.

2:48 p.m: Suspicious Vehicle - 93100 blk, Paschelke Rd.

4:18 p.m: Harassment - 38800 blk, Meadow Creek Ln.

6:31 p.m: Dispute - 88400 blk, Missy Ln.

8:09: p.m: Information - 43300 blk, McK. Hwy.

9:22 p.m: Information - 43300 blk, McK. Hwy.

11:14 p.m: Business Check - 39200 blk, McK. Hwy.

11:14 p.m: Attempt To Locate Drunk Driver - Marcola Rd.

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MCKENZIE FIRE & RESCUE

Nov. 17: 8:20: Deerhorn Rd./ Bridge St. Line Down. Notified Dispatch, Communication Line Down.

9:46: 87800 blk, Fawn Way. Fall Injury. Patient Assessed, 1 Transported.

11:09: 87800 blk, Fawn Way. Medical, General. Patient Assessed, 1 Transported.

Nov. 18: 9:55: Deerhorn Rd./Milepost 2. Motor Vehicle Accident. Non-Injury, Partially Blocking.

16:48: 89000 blk, Whitewater Rd. Medical, Trauma. Patient Assessed, 1 Transported.

17:22: 39200 blk, McK. Hwy. MVA. Non-Injury, Partially Blocking.

Nov. 20: 11:13: 38200 blk, Mckenzie Hwy Medical, General. Patient Assessed, 1 Transported.

Nov. 21: 11:13: 43700 blk, McK. Hwy. Medical, General. Patient Assessed, 1 Transported.

19:41: McK. Hwy./Cedar Flat Rd. MVA. Non-Injury, Non-Blocking.

Nov. 22: 5:52: 90100 blk, Greenwood Dr. Medical, Trauma. Patient Assessed, 1Transported.

12:05: Camp Creek Rd./ Stephens Rd. MVA. Disregarded En Route.

McK. Fire & Rescue will hold its monthly Board of Directors meeting on Monday, Monday, December 21, at noon, in the Leaburg Training Center, 42870 McK. Hwy. The district maintains Facebook, Twitter, and web pages. If you have a question or concern about any Fire District business, give Chief Bucich a call @ 541-896-3311. If he is unavailable, please leave a message and he will respond ASAP.

UPPER MCKENZIE FIRE & RESCUE

Nov. 19: 06:34: Medical – 54000 block, McK. River Dr. Female, Conscious, Breathing.

Nov. 22: 02:20: Medical – 54000 blk, McK. River Dr. Female, Conscious, Breathing.

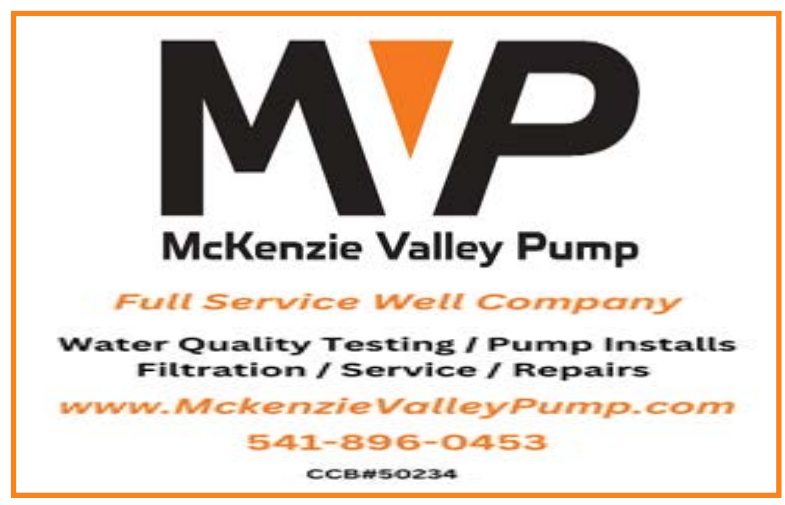
17:57: Motor Vehicle Accident, Possible Injury – McK. Hwy./ Drury Ln. Vehicle vs. deer. Vehicle is still in the road.

Nov. 23: 09:57: Medical - 52000 blk, McK. Hwy. Male, Conscious, Breathing.

The Upper McK. Fire District's board of directors will hold its monthly meeting at 7 p.m. on Monday, December 21, at the Blue River Fire Station 2, 51730 Echo St. in Blue River.







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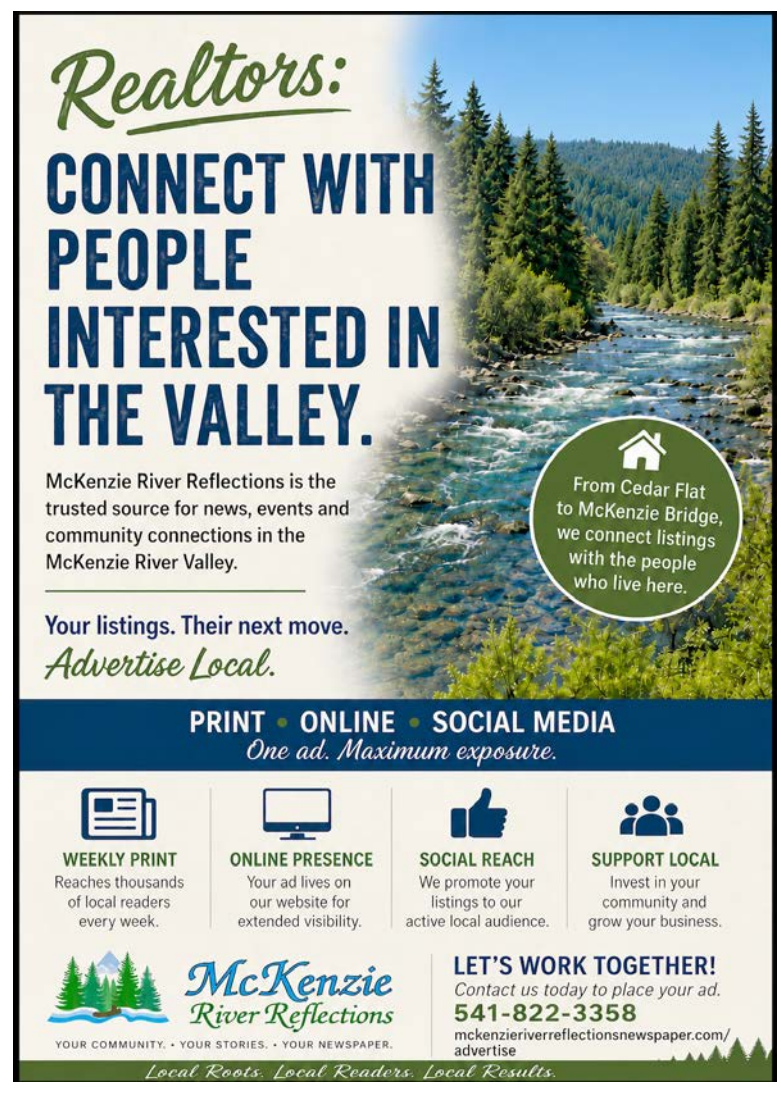



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Central Oregon's legendary crystal cave: Is it real?

***Somewhere in the high desert of central Oregon, there's a large** cave lined with quartz crystals, which you can walk into. Where is it? There are people who know ... but they're not talking.*

By Finn J.D. John

Central Oregon is cave country. There may be more caves, discovered and undiscovered, within a 100-mile radius of Bend than anywhere else in the country — ranging in size from tiny, dangerous lava tubelets like Thimble Cave to mile-long subterranean vaults like Lava River Cave.

To the dedicated cadre of spelunkers who enjoy exploring these secret underground spaces, finding any previously unknown cave is a dream.

But there's one particular cave — one that may actually not exist, but probably does — for which cave buffs have been keeping their eyes peeled for more than a century now.

This cave is usually called "the Lost Crystal Cave." And lost it is indeed — so lost that no one really knows whether to file its story under "geology" or "folklore."

As usual in cases like this, we'll start with the folklore.

There are two basic versions of the Lost Crystal Cave legend, and dozens of sub-variants; passed on from mouth to ear for generations, the story has changed and grown like a wind-blown juniper tree. Both variants estimate the worth of the cave, as described, as roughly $1 million — but it's pretty clear that they don't really know, since they've been using that same number for about 50 years now. The date of discovery ranges from 1896 to 1904.

The most commonly heard version of the tale comes from Marjorie Smith, the daughter of a Bend shopkeeper named Nicholas Smith, who spent most of the 1910s and 1920s beating the bushes looking for it. Marjorie was about 10 years old when it was supposedly found, so her recollections carry some authority.



US Forest Service

A group of hikers descends into Lava River Cave, near Bend in Central Oregon.

According to Marjorie, the crystal cave was discovered by a group of cowboys on a cattle drive from Burns to LaPine. Near Pine Mountain, the drovers stopped for the night to make camp and cook dinner. While hunting up some wood for a cooking fire, the cowboys found a cave entrance; looking inside with a light, they gasped and stared.

They were in a room-size cavern, and the walls and ceilings were covered with thousands and thousands of clear diamond-like crystals.

The cowboys broke some off for souvenirs and continued on their voyage to La Pine, and then to Bend. When they arrived, they told anyone who would listen what they had found, offering the chunks of crystals as proof.

The cowboys had places to go, so they moved on shortly after that. But Marjorie's father, Nicholas Smith, got curious after examining the crystals. So he rode out south of town to try to pick up the trail of the cattle drive.

This he soon did, and by nosing around at the places where he found the cowboys had camped, he found the cave. It was everything the cowboys had said.

But the weather was looking ominous, and Nicholas didn't want to get stuck out on the range in the snowstorm that he thought was coming — or get stuck sheltering in a cave with no food while his horse shivered outside. He broke off a few more crystals and, noting the relevant landmarks as best he could, hurried home to Bend.

That spring, he returned — or tried to. Problem was, without the cattle trail to follow, he had no idea where to go; and the landmarks he'd tried to use just weren't helping him.

Nicholas Smith spent the next 20 years fruitlessly searching for the cave. He found plenty of caves during that time — little pockets under rimrock and lava tubes of the type the Bend area is peppered with — but no sign of the crystal cave.

The other version of the Crystal Cave story came from Aubrey Perry, son-in-law of Newt Cobb, one of the men who supposedly discovered it. In this version, there were three men and they were not driving cattle; they were on their way from Millican Ranch, where they'd just finished a job shearing sheep, heading for the old Shonquest Ranch near Sunriver. They stopped to camp for the night; while gathering firewood one of them found the cave entrance; and that's how the story comes into circulation in Bend.

The trouble with this story is, it's geographically impossible. Geologist Larry Chitwood told writer Melany Tupper that the terrain between Millican and Sunriver is just not old enough to support the growth of quartz crystals the size of the samples.

So could the crystals have been something else? Ice? Opals? Maybe, but that wouldn't explain the sheepmen's having brought quartz crystals back from their journey.

So, what are we left with? Not much. But, there is a third possibility. What if the cowboys were actually on a drive from somewhere other than Burns? What if they were coming into the Bend-La Pine area from, say, Baker City or John Day, and somehow — by accident or by design — the story got altered?

When the original version of this story was first published in the Redmond Spokesman, back in 2010, I got a phone call from a gentleman from Pendleton. I didn't catch his name, although he did throw it; it was just as well, since I know he wouldn't have been OK with being mentioned by name in this article. Judging by his voice, I would estimate he was 75 to 85 years old. In any case, he was mostly interested to know more details of where I thought the cave was. I told him the legends I'd unearthed.

When he spoke next, he actually sounded relieved. With a chuckle, he told me the cave was nowhere near the places I was talking about; it was northeast of Bend, he

Crystal Cave - Page 10



By Slim Randles

You know, bein' a philosotizer on the radio shore is fasserna-tin'. Yessir! Ol' Alphonse Wilson here, at your service seven days a month except on Fridays, which is my helpin' day. And sometimes I sneak in here when Slim isn't lookin'.

But what I'm going to tell you 'bout today is the help I can give to others. How do I know all this? Hey … I got letters!

Shore as Sweet Minnie Clark likes to dance, I got letters. And they want to know how to fix stuff that ain't too good in their lives, and boy howdy, that's right on down my driveway, you can bet your last jar of peanut butter on that.

So let's look at this first 'un I got:

Dear Windy (you know they call me Windy on the radio ... oh, shore you do)

What do I do about my courtship problems? I drive to town to see my girl every Saturday night, just like clockwork, right after work. I clean corrals for a living, you know. And just when I get to her house, she meets me on the porch and tells me she has other plans.

I'm serious about this girl, Windy. She's as nice as Rosie O'Donnell herself and has a smile like a truck stop chandelier. I can't live without her. I want to have her children someday. I think only of her with each wheelbarrow load I make.

What do I do?
Signed,
BAFFLED IN BALTIMORE

Dear Baffled:

First off, I didn't know Baltimore had corrals, and I'm regurgitatin'ly grateful to you for the heads up on that 'un. Second off, try takin' a shower BEFORE you go to town to see her. Might even want to change your shirt. If you can't do that, at least squirt some Old Spice under each arm. Them girls is kinda persnickety 'bout that. Go ahead and use soap, too. They got soap now that makes a guy smell jest about like a barbershop. That there soap might jest

Home Country - Page 10

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OSU Gardening Tips

Oregon State University

Feed winter birds with the right seed, shelter and water



Chris LaBelle

Bushtits are frequent visitors to the suet feeder.

As winter approaches and natural food dwindles, backyard birds benefit from quality feeders.

"Mixes with red millet, golden millet, flax seed, rape seed and oats are a waste," said Dana Sanchez, wildlife specialist with the Oregon State University Extension Service. "Birds will just kick those fillers out of the feeder."

Put black oil sunflower seeds at the top of the list because they attract species such as chickadees, black-headed grosbeaks, house sparrows, northern flickers and song sparrows.

To draw finches, offer nyjer (thistle) seed in a feeder designed to hold the tiny seed. Many birds — waxwings, grosbeaks, chickadees and robins — will also take fruit placed on an elevated platform feeder.

For future bird food, plant native, fruiting trees and shrubs such as elderberry, serviceberry, dogwood and snowberry.

Offer suet in cold weather

People enjoy watching woodpeckers go after suet blocks.

"The fat-and-seed mixtures are best used in fall and winter when birds need the extra energy to keep warm," Sanchez said.

In warm weather, suet can spoil quickly. If you use it in summer, check it often and remove it when it starts to smell.

Feed hummingbirds correctly

• Hummingbirds need a sugar-rich diet.

• Use 4 parts water to 1 part sugar.

• Bring to a gentle boil for 1 minute, cool and fill the feeder.

• Do not add red coloring.

• Make only enough for a few days to prevent mold.

"Colored feeders will attract hummingbirds, and once they find it, they'll be back," Sanchez said.

Clean feeders weekly

"Cleaning all bird feeders once a week is essential," Sanchez said. "Moisture contributes to mold, which can cause disease."

• Discard leftover feed.

• Scrub inside and out with a long-handled brush.

• Rinse with a solution of 10 parts water to 1 part bleach.

• Let the feeder dry completely before refilling.

Place feeders near cover

"You'll notice no matter how many ports you have, there will be competitions," Sanchez said. "It's a matter of 'Get off that perch; it's mine.'"

"Birds at feeders are always on the lookout for danger," she said. "There are times when you put feeders where humans can see them, but birds won't use them if there's not a shrub nearby."

Provide nearby shrubs or trees so birds can escape wind and predators.

Give birds water

• Birds need water, too.

• Use a shallow, flat-bottomed dish with 1/2 to 1 inch of water.

• Place it in sun or shade.

• Clean it often.

• Change the water daily or every other day.

Keep seed off the ground

"To reduce the chance of rats

Continued On Page 10

Country Kitchen

Recipes • Traditions • Memories • Seasonal Living

By Mary Emma Allen

THANKSGIVING BECOMES OFFICIAL

"We must have Thanksgiving, President Lincoln!" exclaimed Sarah Josepha Hale. "This must become a national holiday."

We think the first Thanksgiving took place in Plymouth Colony, Massachusetts. However, this celebration wasn't an official holiday until many years later. A woman from the State of New Hampshire was responsible for this.

Mrs. Sarah Josepha Hale,the editor of "Godey's Lady's Book," decided Thanksgiving should become a national holiday. She suggested that one day in late fall be set aside to give thanks.

From 1846 to 1863, she sent letters to presidents, governors, and many important people. Mrs. Hale also wrote many articles in her magazine, urging recognition of Thanksgiving as a holiday.

For a long time nothing happened. The man who finally listened to Mrs. Hale was President Abraham Lincoln.

"Mr. Lincoln, this should be a national holiday," urged Mrs. Hale.

The President decided a day of thanksgiving also might help create harmony in the nation fighting the Civil War. So in 1863, President Lincoln declared, "Thanksgiving Day will be held the last Thursday in November."

At Mrs. Hale's suggestion, he named the last Thursday as Thanksgiving the next year, too.

This holiday has been celebrated ever since.

Our thanks goes to Mrs. Sarah Josepha Hale. Her actions resulted in an official holiday for us to pause and give thanks for our blessings.

(In 1941, Congress changed Thanksgiving from the last Thursday in November to the fourth Thursday of the month. Since then, the fourth Thursday, which sometimes is the last one, has officially been celebrated as Thanksgiving.

MAYONNAISE CAKE was a favorite in my childhood and easy to make.

Mix together 2 cups flour, 1 1/2 teaspoons baking soda, 4 tablespoons cocoa, 1 cup sugar, 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder. Then add 1 cup cold water, 2 teaspoons vanilla, 1 cup mayonnaise. Mix well.

Country Kitchen - P10

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Local events & meetings

HAVE AN EVENT TO SHARE? Submit details at tinyurl.com/3j38kkxz

December 1
Lane County Board of Commissioners
9 am



The Board of Commissioner meetings begin at 9 a.m. in Harris Hall, 125 E 8th Ave, Eugene, unless otherwise noted on the published agenda. Regular Board Meetings are scheduled for Tuesday. Wednesday Board meetings are on an as needed basis

December 1
Coffee With Locals
10 - 11 am



Come have a cup of coffee with the locals (paid for by Locals Helping Locals). Catch up with your neighbors, discuss how you are doing in the fire recovery process, and share your successes and struggles. Meets at Obsidian Grill in McKenzie Bridge. (541) 729-9802.

December 1
EWEB Meeting
5:30 - 8 pm



The Eugene Water & Electric Board Commissioners will meet from 5:30 to 8 p.m. at EWEB's Roosevelt Operations Center, 4200 Roosevelt Blvd. in Eugene. Customers and the general public are welcome and encouraged to attend in person or watch a live stream of the meeting in real-time. Each person will have up to three minutes to speak.

December 1
Grange Meeting
7:30 - 8:30 pm

The Walterville Grange #416 will meet from 6:30 to 8 p.m. at 39259 Camp Creek Road. The first two monthly meetings are held on the first Tuesday

December 2
BR Water Board
6 - 7 pm



Blue River Water Board Monthly Board meeting in the O'Brien Memorial Library meeting room,, 51771 Blue River Dr.

December 5
Ornaments For All
10 am - 2 pm



The McKenzie River Discovery Center (at Leaburg Lake) will be collaborating with Willamette Valley - Oregon Wine Country for the Ornaments for All Abilities event at the Discovery Center site at Leaburg Lake.

After hunting for an ornament, enter the sweepstakes for a McKenzie River getaway, explore the newly remodeled hatchery and community buildings. Mom's Pies Wholesale will be on site with hot slices and frozen pies to take home for the holidays.

December 5
Church Fundraiser
10 am - 3 pm



The McKenzie Bridge Christian Church, 56334 McKenzie Hwy. will Raffle off Amazing items donated by generous vendors. You can help support local families through The Giving Tree & the Upper McKenzie Food Pantry by bringing in 2 non-expired cans of food or a small stocking-stuffer & receive a raffle ticket.

December 5
Benefit Concert
3:30 - 6 pm



There will be an evening of music, laughter, and community with Beth Wood and Dennis McGregor at the beautiful Vida McKenzie Community Center for a performance sure to leave you smiling. Tickets are $40 and include dinner, featuring Stage Stop Pizza and potluck dishes shared by community members. Please contact Shelly Pruitt for ticket info: (541) 554-9332.

December 6
Storytime Book Signing
2 - 4 pm



The holiday season will kick off with a special Story Time Book Signing featuring Dennis McGregor and Beth Wood, along with the picture book You Stole My Name. After the book singing, stick around and join the library's Christmas Party.

Dennis McGregor is well-known for his posters and children's books as well as his music. Beth Wood is an award-winning songwriter, poet, and joyful singer who has released sixteen albums, four books of poetry, and a collection of funny stories from the road.

December 6
Boat Parade
3:30 - 5:30 pm



Bring your drift boat all lit up to Leaburg Lake. You can put in at the lake or at the EWEB boat ramp. By nighttime there should be a lake full of boats lit up for the holiday season. If you have any questions, please call Kevin Palahniuk 541-912-9796. Boats start launching from Leaburg around 3:30pm-4:00pm

Kayaks, paddle boards, boats! If it floats put it in.

December 7
Ladies Christmas
6 - 7:30 pm



Come join in for the Ladies Christmas Party at the McKenzie Bible Fellowship, 45061 McKenzie Hwy. Craft Sales start at 6:00 pm, Program begins 6:30 pm - Theme: Comfort & Joy. Special Speakers will be Megan Simnitt & Chelsea Kuepper. Please bring a plate of appetizers or Christmas treats to share. RSVP by signing up at church or calling 541-896-3829

December 8
Lane County Board of Commissioners
9 am



The Board of Commissioner meetings begin at 9 a.m. in Harris Hall, 125 E 8th Ave, Eugene, unless otherwise noted on the published agenda. Regular Board Meetings are scheduled for Tuesday. Wednesday Board meetings are on an as needed basis

December 8
Gentle Dental Van
8:30 am - 2 pm



The Gental Dental Van will be at the Orchid McKenzie River Clinic, 51730 Dexter St. in Blue River. A first visit will include a patient assessment, intraoral photos, teeth cleaning, charting, and X-Rays. Call 360-449-9500 or 800-525-6800 to schedule new patient appointments or teeth cleaning.

December 8
Tourism Committee
9 - 10 am

The McKenzie River Chamber of Commerce Tourism Committee meets via Zoom every Second Tuesday of every month. Please join in even if you are not a Chamber member. The committee strives to strengthen the support of locals interested in improving tourism and the economic vitality of the entire McKenzie River Valley. Email the Tourism Chair to get on the meeting email list: Treasurer@McKenzieChamber.com

WEEKLY MEETINGS

TUESDAY

VMCC - 11 am
Doors open at the Vida McKenzie Community Center, 90377 Thomson Lane

Little Poker League 6 - 8 pm
Vida McKenzie Community Center

WEDNESDAY

Upper McKenzie Community Center - 7 - 8 pm
Go-Gi Brazilian Ju-Jitsu at the UMCC, 54745 McK River Drive

Watershed Wednesday - 9 - 11:30 am
Coburg
Join the McKenzie River Trust every Wednesday

WEDNESDAY & THURSDAY

AA Meetings
Wednesdays at 6 pm and Sundays at 5 pm at the McKenzie Valley Presbyterian Church, plus Thursdays at the clinic onb Dexter St, Blue River

THURSDAY

MMRS Net - 6 pm
The McKenzie Valley Neighborhood Radio Group meets at 6 pm on 462.6750 MHZ, Tone 100.0 Hz (often Radio Memory Channel 28) on the Deathball Repeater

FRIDAY

Yoga in Leaburg - 8:30 am
Friday Yoga at the Firehouse is back! 42870 McK. Hwy., Leaburg

SAIL Exercise Program - 10 - 11 am
Vida McKenzie Community Center, 90377 Thomson Lane. Instructor-led exerciss to boost strength, independence and confidence. All ages and abilities welcome.

SATURDAY

A Dime At A Time
Morning sorting sessios from 10 am - noon. Donations can be dropped off at the Leaburg Store.

An Invitation to Worship

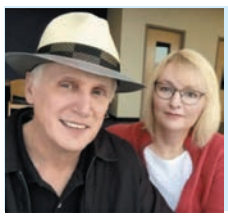
Catholic Church St. Benedict Lodge Chapel
1/2 mile off Hwy. 126 on North Bank Rd., McKenzie Bridge
Saturday Vigil Mass - 5:00 PM*
Sunday Mass - 9:30 AM (Starting November 29th until Easter Mass begins at 10 AM; adoration 9:30AM)
Weekday Mass (M-F) - 9:00 AM (Friar's Chapel)
Confessions - 4:15-4:45 PM* Sat; 8:45-9:15 AM Sun
Office of Readings and morning prayer - 8:30 AM (Friar's Chapel)
*Winter season (November 1-March 22): Saturday

McKenzie Bible Fellowship
45061 McKenzie Hwy – Vida, Oregon
Sunday Worship – 10:00 a.m.
Youth Ministries
KidsFest Family Activities
Small Group Fellowships
Men's & Women's Bible Studies
Call 896-3829 for information
www.mckenziebible.com

Living Water Family Fellowship
Pastor - Doug Fairrington
52353 McKenzie Hwy - Milepost 42
541-822-3820
Gathering Sundays at 10:00 AM,
Children's ministry also.
Come early for a meet and greet continental breakfast and coffee at 9:30 AM.
Thursdays, 6:00 PM, Celebrate Recovery (12 Step Program)

McKenzie Bridge Christian Church
56334 McKenzie Hwy, McKenzie Bridge, OR 97413
9:30 a.m. Sunday school for all ages
11:00 a.m. Worship Service & Nursery
Need a ride? Call 541-822-3289

McKenzie Valley Presbyterian Church
Please join us for worship Sundays at 10:30 am, either in church on Hwy. 126 just east of Walterville, or on our Facebook livestream. You may also make prayer requests, or request an emailed or earth-mailed bulletin – phone or send email to Nancy Ashley, nancy.w.ashley@gmail.com, 541-914-1986. We would love to meet you!
Milepost 13 McKenzie Hwy. (541) 747-2604



Direct Answers

By Wayne & Tamara Mitchell

Straight talk and real advice for everyday lofe.

Unadulterated Truth



Last night I was going through a bunch of old stuff when I came across a lockbox. I'd never seen it before, and it was locked. There were keys hanging on a hook. I found the key and opened it to find a bunch of love letters to my husband.

In it was a picture of a woman. She was black and my husband and I are both white. I was shocked I knew who this woman was. His parents would never have approved. I shut the box and went back to cleaning, only to find another lockbox.

I opened it and found letters and cards from this same woman covering 14 years of our marriage. They professed her love for him and the times they spent together. I was devastated. He cheated with her almost our entire married life.

Her husband died three years ago. In her final letter to my husband she wrote she felt used by my husband. She has since remarried and moved to London. I also found cards from another woman dated in the same period. Either she had an affair with my husband or a large infatuation. I lay awake in bed last night wanting to kill my husband. I am consumed with anger, hate, and disappointment.

I wish nothing but ill for him and his tramps. I don't know what to do. Has he ever loved me? In less than a year our bills will be paid. I don't want a divorce. Do I contact the other woman and let her know I know about her and my husband's affair? Oh, the one with the infatuation? I already took care of her. She runs every time she sees me.

I've been a good wife. I am an attractive woman. What can I do to keep him from cheating again?

Marjorie

Marjorie, you question whether your husband ever loved you, and you don't want a divorce. So what does marriage mean to you? Love? A connection which nothing can break? Or financial security?

Keep your anger focused where it belongs. This man has marital vows with you. None of his women do. You don't know what he said to encourage, hold, and maintain a relationship with them. If his family had approved, he may have married another.

He should feel shame for continuing a relationship with a woman he was not willing to stand up for. That proves his lack of character. That same lack of character allowed him to marry you and continue other relationships. No surprise that there is yet another woman waiting in the wings.

You cannot defend your marriage against every other woman on the planet. The only way you can defend your marriage is by dealing with the man you married. How much easier is it to confront him than to confront all the other women he might come in contact with?

It's him, not other women, you have issues with. If he can cheat on you, while you are attractive and healthy, can you believe he would stay with you when you are ill or disabled?

Just because one person, you, wants this relationship to continue, it does not mean the relationship will continue. Your husband can end the marriage at any time. Whatever financial or emotional control you have over him may be outweighed by another. That's why we say, without fidelity there is no security.

He has cheated on you throughout your marriage. Asking him to stop cheating is like asking the leopard to change its spots.

What is in your best interest? Can you live a lifetime doubting if you have ever been truly loved? The decision is not how to make the leopard change his spots. The decision is whether you give your life over to the leopard.

Wayne & Tamara

Wayne & Tamara are the authors of Cheating in a Nutshell and The Young Woman's Guide to Older Men—available from Amazon, iTunes, and booksellers everywhere.

Cold Turkey

I dated a girl two years. The first time it ended because she started doing drugs and wouldn't stop. When she began dating a druggie friend, I continued giving her rides, a place to crash for a night, and money. Then she left him and came back to me.

Cautiously I decided to give it another try. Unfortunately I found out she had been dating this other man and me at the same time. It ended once more. Later we started to talk again, but that ended with her taking my time and money, and then leaving.

My conscious mind can recognize she is all-around not a good person, much less good for me. I know she has taken much from me and given little in return. My mind seems to have completely gotten over her, but my body can't seem to.

Whenever I see any white car remotely resembling hers, I turn and stare. If I see a girl with the same skin complexion, I can't help but gaze. When I hear her name, my stomach tightens, and if I see her, I feel immensely downtrodden.

I would say without a doubt I am over her, but I can't help feeling queasy and even jealous when I hear news of her, good or bad. These are all instinctual, involuntary actions. I don't understand.

It is as if my brain has moved on, but my body is still going through the motions of breaking up. I know time is probably the best cure, but it is difficult living like this.

Dylan

Dylan, warnings not heeded, conscience not listened to, red lights driven through. Sooner or later, they all catch up to you. So will you heed another warning, or will you boldly go where no man should go?

Don't be a lemming, or just another mouse for the snake. Warnings we don't heed are snakes we feed. When you were with her, you were way overmatched. This is a woman who charms men to support her habits.

The queasiness and jealousy you feel are textbook symptoms. Twice you were given ample reason to sever contact, and twice you refused. It's not her you need to get out of your system, it's your personal weakness.

By spreading out the pain of breaking up, you reinforced it. Like Pavlov's dog, you trained yourself to salivate at the very thought of her. If you hadn't spent so much time trying to turn ground beef into steak, you would be over this.

Wayne & Tamara

Personal Property

I have been with my husband four years, married for two. He has never accused me of cheating but insists that every man in a 10 mile radius is hot on my trail. At least once a month we fight about this.

I always ask why he doesn't trust me, and he says he does trust me, it's everyone else he doesn't trust. I don't know how to fix this. I have tried so hard. He offered to go to counseling but hasn't saved money for it, and I can't afford it either. I pay for everything else.

I am afraid my only option is divorce. I hate that I am tearing apart our family, but I don't know if I can continue. I feel alone, yet we have talked about this many times. I don't think he is capable of change.

Vonna

Vonna, your husband is trying to exert property rights over you. He is not in love with you, but he is afraid of claim jumpers. Every time he suggests you could be unfaithful he smirches your character. Every day you stay tells him he has the right to do what he is doing.

Like all good people you think this is your problem to fix. But it's not up to you. The only fix is letting him suffer the consequences.

Wayne & Tamara

Wayne & Tamara are the authors of Cheating in a Nutshell and As the Child of an Alcoholic.

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Personal

If you want to drink, that's your business. If you want to stop, that's ours. AA Group meets Wednesday 6:00pm-7:00pm and Sunday 5:00-6:00pm at the McKenzie Valley Presbyterian Church, 88393 Walterville Loop, a block from the Walterville Shopping Center. N/c-sub 5/15/-5/11/14

Piano Lessons

Now accepting piano students - Beginners, Intermediate and Advanced - all ages. Professional jazz pianist, classically trained with years of teaching experience. Located in Leaburg. Please call or text 408.391.3477 or email; kimberly@liquidsister.com. http://www.liquidsister.com SKP-8/16ruc

Pianists Wanted

McKenzie Valley Presbyterian Church aims to form a team of pianists with intermediate-advanced skills for accompanying worship services. $65 per service. To apply, call 541-747-2604 or email: marodstrom@yahoo.com.

Quilters/Needle Crafters

The Leaburg Sew & So's are meeting most Friday afternoons at the McKenzie Fire and Rescue Training Center. Please call Sara at (541) 896-3059 for more information.S=JS-2/25/10ruc

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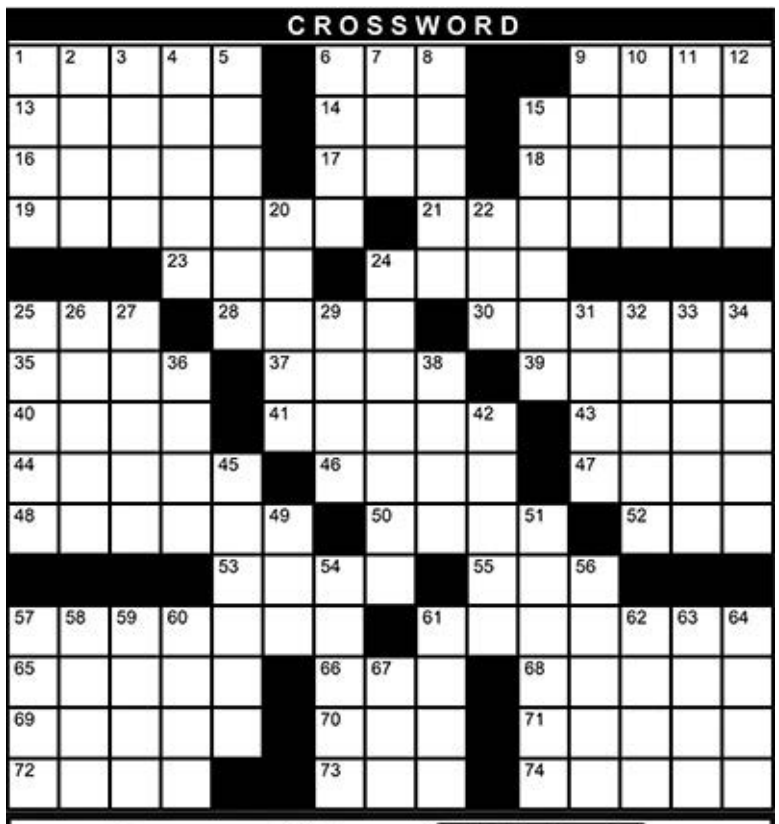



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THE 2000s

ACROSS

1. a.k.a. Manila hemp
6. Unit of electric current
9. Army dining hall
13. Channing of "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes"
14. Spy org.
15. A in AV
16. Are not
17. ____-been
18. Beech tree pulp fabric
19. *I in CGI
21. *2004 Indian Ocean disaster
23. Am is to I a ____ is to we
24. Chutzpah
25. *Ann Patchett's "____ Canto"
28. Zohran Mamdani's branch of Islam
30. Like some breads
35. Sun beams
37. Cathedral recess
39. Fungal skin infection
40. *Shrek or Fiona
41. *Sasha Baron Cohen's role
43. *Mr. Incredible's son
44. What scribes do
46. Awful
47. Silage holder
48. Bee's favorite drink
50. ALCS counterpart
52. ____ Tsu
53. Hoodlum
55. Not hers
57. *Peter ____ of "The Lord of the Rings" fame
61. *Social network
65. Saudi neighbor
66. Not a sweet wine
68. Sign of cancer
69. Subway coin
70. Long time
71. Mideast V.I.P.
72. Place at angle
73. Genetic info carrier, acr.
74. Pulls apart

DOWN

1. Antioxidants-rich smoothie berry
2. Yeasty foam
3. ____ 51
4. "Come on, shake your body, baby, do the ____"
5. Modifies
6. Hurting
7. *Jukebox musical "Mamma ____!"
8. Fusilli, e.g.
9. Unstable particle
10. Tropical tuberous root
11. Thailand, once
12. Solo, pl.
15. Protective necklace
20. Substance abuse treatment inst.
22. *"Rocky Balboa" writer and director
24. Stove burner (2 words)
25. *"The Da Vinci Code" author
26. High wave
27. Chicago opera house
29. *Revolutionary music-playing device
31. Helps
32. Type of mail
33. *All-electric Roadster manufacturer
34. *Popular search engine, with !
36. Badger's den
38. *"My Name Is ____"
42. Related to technology
45. Dines at home
49. Greek R
51. *Train's "Hey, Soul ____"
54. Six feet where?
56. Sea foam
57. Scribbles down
58. In a frenzy
59. *"Short Skirt/Long Jacket" band
60. "I ____ it!"
61. Mimicking bird
62. End of prayer
63. College girl, old-fashioned
64. Mistakes
67. *Anchorman a.k.a. ____ Burgundy

Solution on Page 9

SUDOKU



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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

Stay in touch with what's happening – open the McKenzie Community Calendar!

Click here or go to: tinyurl.com/yeye92hx

Events from Nov 26th

Submit Event



Thu Nov 26th 6:00pm - 6:30pm

McKenzie Valley Neighbors Radio Group

GMRS net tonight (Thursday) "See" you on the repeater. (transmit on 467.675, listen 462.675, PL tone 100 on the...



Thu Nov 26th 6:30pm - 7:00pm

Leaburg GMRS Radio Preparedness

Every Thursday: McKenzie Valley Neighbors GMRS Radio Preparedness Group Network Check-Ins...



Fri Nov 27th 8:00am - 9:00am

Yoga in Leaburg

Every Friday at McKenzie Fire & Rescue's Leaburg Training Center



Fri Nov 27th 10:00am - 11:00am

SAIL Exercise Program

Join the SAIL program on Fridays for instructor-led exercises to boost strength, independence, and confidence. All age...



Sat Nov 28th 10:00am - 12:00pm

A Dime At A Time

Blue River Bottle Boys Collection/Sorting - Saturday morning sorting sessions every Saturday from 10-noon. Donation...



Tue Dec 1st

Lane County Board of Commissioners

The Board of Commissioner meetings begin at 9:00 a.m. in Harris Hall, unless otherwise noted on the...



Tue Dec 1st 10:00am - 11:00am

COFFEE WITH THE LOCALS

Come have a cup of coffee with the locals (paid for by Locals Helping Locals). Catch up with your neighbors,...



Tue Dec 1st 3:00pm

VMCC Senior Center

Doors open at 11 a.m. Our Senior Center events are a wonderful opportunity to connect, learn, and grow. They...



Tue Dec 1st 5:30pm - 8:00pm

Eugene Water & Electric Board Commissioners meeting

Customers and the general public are welcome and encouraged to attend in person or watch a live stream of t...



Tue Dec 1st 6:30pm - 8:00pm

Walterville Grange #416 meeting

Our first two monthly meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month. We have a potluck dinner at 6:30 P...



Tue Dec 1st 7:00pm - 8:00pm

Upper McKenzie Jiu-Jitsu

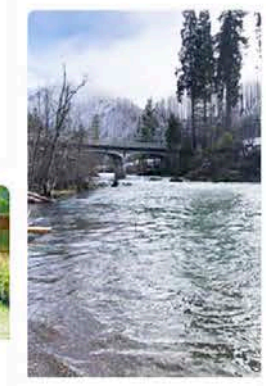
No-Gi Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu club For More Information Email: uppermckenziejiujitsu@gmail.com...



Wed Dec 2nd 9:00am - 11:30am

Watershed Wednesday

Join McKenzie River Trust every Wednesday morning from 9am-11:30am at Green Island to help care for this...



Wed Dec 2nd 6:00pm - 7:00pm

Blue River Water Board Monthly Board meeting

The Blue River Water District Board will meet from 6 to 7 p.m. in the



Wed Dec 2nd

God Is Not a Father

By Jaswinder Bolina

When you ask, I tell you God is just a word for things

We don't understand yet. Outside the packed tavern,

A solitary drunk staggers into a sudden shaft of sun

Like he's about to be raptured or transported

Onto a starship. The furry waveform of a squirrel

Bounds into the hard particles of traffic. You look small

Even for a little kid eating Goldfish® crackers

In a booster seat in the rearview mirror. When you ask,

I tell you some call it God, but others call it Om

Or Satnam or Unkulunkulu, and some call it Father,

But god is not a father. Because god is a mommy?

You ask. I tell you maybe, but some say god is

Something greater than a mommy or a daddy.

You say, Nothing is greater than mommy.

I tell you maybe, but some say god is the first cause,

And some say God is the last word, and some don't

Say anything at all because is supposed to be

A sound louder than the mouth, an idea bigger

Than the mind. A billion or a quadrillion

Or an infinity times bigger? I tell you

Nothing is bigger than the mind. I tell you

Infinity is just a word for things we haven't

Figured out yet. Some say it isn't even real.

But you say, Infinity is real, and I tell you maybe

Because a father doesn't need to be a zealot or a cudgel.

It starts to rain. The wipers wave back and forth

Like arms above a revival. You inhale

A boxful of raisins. You pound a pouchful of yogurt.

I call you a bottomless bunny, and you giggle

Like a windchime. We drive through the downpour

Listening to human music. You ask, How did I learn

How to talk? You ask, How does the rain rain?

You ask, Who was the first person? Was he lonely?

The rain stops. A sunburst douses the road

In a nearly intolerable light. I tell you, By listening.

I tell you, By gravity. I tell you the first person

Was a squiggle of nucleotides dropped

From a meteorite into a bubble of petroleum

In a tide pool on the Proterozoic earth. You ask,

When will we be home? I want to see Mommy.

I tell you maybe six minutes.

I tell you probably ten.

Source: Poetry (November 2026)

Born in Chicago, poet Jaswinder Bolina earned a BA in philosophy from Loyola University in Chicago, an MFA in creative writing from the University of Michigan, and a PhD in English with a creative writing concentration from Ohio University. He is the author of the chapbook The Tallest Building in America (2014) and the poetry collections English as a Second Language and Other Poems (2023), The 44th of July (2019), Carrier Wave (2007), winner of the 2006 Colorado Prize for Poetry, and Phantom Camera (2013), winner of the Green Rose Prize in Poetry from New Issues Press and published in an international edition by Hachette India.

Compared to poets like John Ashbery, James Tate, and Dean Young, Bolina investigates language, experience, and innovative writing. Poet Ravi Shankar, writing on The Best American Poetry blog, noted that Bolina "breaks new perceptual and sonic ground," adding "he encapsulates the American South Asian immigrant experience, at least as I've experienced it."

Bolina was the 2010–2011 Elma Stuckey Liberal Arts & Sciences Emerging Poet-in-Residence at Columbia College in Chicago. He is the author of the collection of essays Of Color (2020). His critical and creative writing has been included in The Task of Un/Masking (2014), Language: A Reader for Writers (2013), Best American Poetry (2011), and Poets on Teaching: A Sourcebook (2010). Bolina currently teaches in the MFA program at the University of Miami





Report: Skyrocketing costs for Oregon family caregivers



Lee and Susan Bliven live in Eugene. A new report shows people caring for someone who lives in a nursing home are spending an average of half of their annual household income on caregiving expenses. (Ian Bates)

By Isobel Charle
Oregon News Service

Unpaid family caregivers in Oregon and across the U.S. are spending an average of $11,000 a year out of pocket to support their loved one, which is 60% more than five years ago, according to a new national study from AARP.

The study found caregivers are spending nearly a third of their annual household income on related costs, mostly on housing and medical care.

Lee Bliven II has been caring for his wife, Susan, who has dementia and is disabled, since 2001. He said she sees 13 specialists regularly and he is lucky to have Oregon Health Plan and support from the Cowlitz Indian Tribe.

"Between the co-pays that we would have had to pay and the medications, we'd be spending between $8,000 and $10,000 a month on medical bills. So without the help, it would be devastating," Bliven explained.

When not with his wife, Bliven advocates for people who need long-term care in Oregon. After his wife nearly died in a care facility, he helped pass legislation to make them safer and another to stop them from charging extra for doctor-ordered food.

Another report from AARP found, along with a hit to their wallets, caregivers said it takes a big toll on their emotional and physical health, reporting about 40% more poor mental health days than average.

Bliven noted the stress of caregiving has affected his own health to the point where it forced him to leave his job and he is now pushing for state-sponsored respite for caregivers.

"You need some space to be yourself for a little bit, a day, a few hours. All it really takes is just a little bit so you can focus on yourself and not the person you're caring for," Bliven emphasized.

The report found Black and low-income households have been affected the most by caregiving costs, spending upwards of three-quarters of their income. The report pointed out it is likely creating steep debt. Nationally, AARP has been pushing for the Credit for Caring Act, which would give a federal tax break for caregivers.

publicnewsservice.org

SHERIFF'S REPORT

Continued From Page 3

Nov. 21: 8:09 a.m: Suspicious Conditions - McK. Hwy.

8:55 a.m: Dispute - 52500 blk McK. Hwy.

12:07 p.m: Accident,Vehicle - Bike - Camp Creek Rd.

1:00 p.m: Information - 8700 blk, McK. Hwy.

1:50 p.m: Disorderly Juvenile - 59200 blk, N. Belknap Springs Rd.

3:18 p.m: Reckless Endangering - 88900 blk, Marcola Rd.

3:56 p.m: Traffic Hazard - Hill Rd.

6:05 p.m: Traffic Hazard - 7800 blk, Thurston Rd.

Nov. 22: 7:48 a.m: Welfare Check - McK. Hwy.

8:19 a.m: Suspicious Vehicle - 8600 blk, McK. Hwy.

10:33 a.m: Suspicious Conditions - 35200 blk, Camp Creek Rd.

Comments, as reported, may not be complete or accurate. if further information is required contact the Lane County Sheriff's Office.

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Fishing Report

McKenzie River: All hatchery rainbow trout released into the McKenzie River are marked with an adipose fin clip and anglers must release all non fin-clipped (wild) trout in the mainstem river. The lower 11 miles of the McKenzie River below the Hayden Bridge - and the McKenzie River upstream from Forest Glen Boat Ramp at Blue River - are restricted to angling with lures and flies only, and all trout must be released.

Trout Stocking Schedule: Trout stocking is underway on many lakes and reservoirs throughout the state. Releases of 8" to 10" hatchery fish this week were: McKenzie River below Leaburg Dam – 2,000.

Fish Counts

November 19, Willamette Falls

Fall Chinook – 1,326

Winter Steelhead – 54

A Moment in Oregon History

By Rick Steber
(www.ricksteber.com)

November 26 - Ben Holladay got his start in business by selling mules to the army during the Mexican American War. Following the war he purchased surplus army supplies at bargain prices and sold them to men rushing to the gold strike in California. He used the profits to purchase the Overland Mail Express, and in 1866 he turned around and sold out to the Wells Fargo Company for more than one million dollars. He came to Oregon and made an impact by purchasing stage companies and riverboats and building a railroad down the east side of the Willamette Valley. Holladay owned a number of mansions on both coasts and lived a lavish lifestyle that finally caught up with him in the financial panic of 1873. He lost his railroad and most of his other holdings and died in Portland in 1887.

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C	A	R	O	L		C	I	A		A	U	D	I	O
A	R	E	N	T		H	A	S		M	O	D	A	L
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7	6	1	9	5	8	4	2	3
4	3	8	1	7	2	6	9	5
9	2	5	3	6	4	1	8	7
5	7	6	4	9	1	2	3	8
8	9	2	6	3	7	5	4	1
3	1	4	2	8	5	7	6	9
6	8	7	5	4	9	3	1	2
1	5	3	8	2	6	9	7	4
2	4	9	7	1	3	8	5	6

Gardening Tips

Continued From Page 2

visiting your bird stations, keep seed off the ground," Sanchez said.

• Choose or adapt feeders with a catch pan.

• If you like ground-feeding birds, elevate a platform feeder slightly and clean underneath.

It may not always stop rats, and some birds may not use the elevated platform.

Dealing with squirrels

"I don't mind them," Sanchez said. "But some people find themselves in conflict with squirrels."

"To thwart them, use baffles," she said.

• Place feeders on pole hangers away from jump-off points.

• Try feeders with cages that close when a squirrel lands.

• Check bird shops or online sources for squirrel-resistant designs.

Avoid chemicals

"We really need to be thinking about what we're putting on our gardens," Sanchez said. "We need to be cautious."

Do not spray pesticides or use pelletized weed-and-feed or moss killer where birds are feeding.

Want to learn more about this topic? Explore more resources from OSU Extension: *Wildlife*

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Home Country

Continued From Page 4

be a good investerment in yore future happiness. You're welcome.

Signed, Dubya Dubya

Ya know, 'minds me of the time me 'n ol' Alberene Soapstone was a-sittin' on her stoop, and she looked over at me with pure-t passion on her pretty face and … oh … better save that 'un for another time, I guess.

And those are Windy's Words of Wisdom, jerking us back from the brink of reason and sanity in the nick of time. Windy Wilson, founder and current c.e.o. of the Home Country spit 'n whittle club and its official sharpener of knives.

....

Brought to you by Meals on Wheels. So the next time you see a sheep driving a truck …

Country Kitchen

Continued From Page 4

Bake 35 minutes at 350 degrees in two 8-inch cake pans, or inserted pick comes out clean.

Serve with vanilla or chocolate icing or whipped topping.

(c) Mary Emma Allen

(Mary Emma Allen researches and writes about family history from her New Hampshire home.)

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Quote of the Week

"I came from a family that considered gravy a beverage."

Erma Bombeck

SPS seeks community members for budget committee

Springfield Public Schools is seeking community members to fill two vacant positions on its Budget Committee, which helps oversee the district's annual budget and provides public input on school spending priorities.

Applications will be accepted through 5 p.m. Friday, Dec. 4, 2026.

The 10-member Budget Committee consists of five elected School Board members and five appointed community representatives. The committee reviews the district's proposed annual budget, evaluates spending priorities and recommends a budget for School Board consideration.

Applicants must be registered voters who have lived within Springfield Public Schools' boundaries for at least one year. District officers and employees are not eligible to serve.

School Board members will review applications December 7–11, with candidate interviews scheduled for Dec. 14, before the Board's regular business meeting. Appointments will be considered during that meeting.

District officials say serving on the committee provides an opportunity for residents to learn more about school finances, participate in decisions affecting students and schools, and help ensure community perspectives are represented in the budget process.

Interested residents can apply online before the Dec. 4 deadline.



Savings shown over aggregated single item base price. Free shipping will be applied to select package (SKU 82395). Minimum purchase of $99 per shipping address to qualify for free gift. 1 free gift per shipping address. The free gift does not apply to the purchase of Gift Cards, Certificates, Wine, Wine & Food Packs, Gift Baskets, Gourmet Salame, Caviar, and Custom Cuts. This offer cannot be combined with any other offer and is not valid on pending or prior purchases. Other restrictions may apply. Some products may not be available for sale in your area. While supplies last. Items may be substituted due to inventory limitations. Sales are subject to OmahaSteaks.com/terms-of-use. Expires 09/30/26. Omaha Steaks, LLC 26M10301

Crystal Cave

Continued From Page 4



Marelbu/Panaramio.com

The entrance to South Ice Cave, which is very close to the location given for the Lost Crystal Cave by Marjorie Smith.

said, about 150 miles out of town.

He made it pretty clear that was as close as he was going to get to revealing its location. But it was, he told me, real; he had been there, several times.

Now, this was 2010, and he was calling me from a land-line — meaning this was a long-distance phone call that he was paying for. He didn't come off as the kind of fellow who has nothing better to do with his time than phone up strangers long-distance to lie about crystal caves.

So, perhaps everyone has been beating the bushes on the wrong side of town for all these years? That certainly could explain 100 years of failure to find anything.

But there is one more possibility as well. And to explain it, I have to tell you what happened in the early 2010s at the Arnold Ice Cave and Hidden Forest Cave.

In the late 1880s and early 1900s, the Arnold Ice Cave was a source for ice in the summertime for the city of Bend. Then affordable refrigeration technology came along and made it unnecessary, and after that, people stopped going to the cave to cut blocks of ice. But the ice continued to grow in the cave, and by about 1940 it had filled up enough of it to block off the entrance.

In 2010, the groundwater flows changed, and the cave cleared enough for people to start coming in again. Members of the caver group Central Oregon Grotto eagerly came to the site and explored it, carefully documenting all the neat old artifacts they found inside: an old cigarette box, a rusty ax, the skull of what appeared to be an actual wolf.

Then word leaked out to the general public. And within a few months, all the artifacts had been pilfered and the walls of the cave covered with spray-painted graffiti.

In the following year, 2011, a group of bonfire partiers with a bag of spray-paint cans visited Hidden Forest Cave and covered every available surface there with about 15 cans' worth of graffiti, covering over Native American pictographs in the process.

And these were just ordinary caves, if there is such a thing. How long do you suppose a cave lined with shimmering, iridescent crystals would last? What do you think it would look like after a couple weekends' worth of souvenir-hunting Philistines came tramping through unsupervised?

It's a pretty safe bet that if any of the cave buffs who remember the Arnold Ice Cave story and the Hidden Forest Cave incident were to stumble across the crystal cave today, they'd keep their mouths shut. They might even drag some brush over the entrance before leaving, to try and keep it hidden a little longer.

And really, could you blame them?

(Sources: Tupper, Melany. High Desert Roses: Significant Stories from Central Oregon. Christmas Valley: 1stBooks, 2003; Wood, Patti D. "The Mystery of the Lost Crystal Cave," Little Known Tales from Oregon History. Bend: Sun Publishing, 1988; McGregor, Brent. "Hidden Forest Cave," The Archaeology Channel, archaeologychannel.org; Skeels, Matt G. "Arnold Ice Cave Pilfered," Central Oregon Subterranean, mattskeels.wordpress.com)

Finn J.D. John teaches at Oregon State University and writes about odd tidbits of Oregon history. His most recent book, Bad Ideas and Horrible People of Old Oregon, published by Ouragan House last year. To contact him or suggest a topic: finn@offbeatoregon.com or 541-357-2222.

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Greg Shine/BLM

The entrance to one of the Redmond Caves, formed when a big lava tube collapsed. Note the graffiti sprayed on the rock above the entrance.

Have an event to share?

Whether you're hosting a workshop, performance, or community gathering, we want to feature it!

Click here or submit your event details at tinyurl.com/3j33kkxz

McKenzie Eagles Sports Report



By Cliff Richardson

Continued From Page 2

Six-man football team, the Elkton Elks, defeated the Crow Cougars, the fifth-ranked team, 35-18, in a State Semi-final game held at Cottage Grove, last Saturday, November 21. It was the second time the Elks and the Cougars locked horns this Fall season.

Both teams hail from the Special District 3 1A (6) six-man football league and Elkton defeated Crow at Crow, 19-7, back on October 9. The Elks would go undefeated the rest of the way, currently 11-0, and the Cougars would wrap up their stellar season with just three defeats, one to North Lake on September 18 and the other two against Elkton.

At Cottage Grove, the Cougars were the first to light up the first quarter scoreboard with Michael Parker's 76-yard pick six interception return. Elkton countered later in the same quarter when sophomore running back Talon Harvey scampered for a 65-yard touchdown score and then kicked the PAT score to give the Elk's a 8-6 lead. Elkton would not relinquish the score lead.

The second quarter had just got under way, when Harvey hauled in a 47-yard touchdown pass from Carson Peters and then proceeded to calmly kick the PAT attempt over the goal post cross bars and add to the lead, 16-6. The Elks and the Cougars would finish out the first half with no further scoring.

Late in the third quarter, with 3:56 on the score clock, Peters would once again connect with his favorite target, Harvey, on a 28-yard TD pass, and the Elk's junior Quarterback would find junior Tight End Brennan Buss alone in the end zone for a 3 yard TD pass.

Crow sophomore running back Aiden DeLeon sparked some life in the Cougar fan section with a 54-yard TD rush with 1:31 minutes left in the third quarter. The PAT rush by DeLeon failed and the quarter ended with Elkton firmly in control, 28-12.

The fourth quarter would find the two rivals slugging it out with no scores, until Elkton sophomore Landon Sadler found the end zone after a 26-yard rush with 1:48 left in the contest. The PAT pass was caught by Wyatt Rollefson and the Elks went up 35-12. Cougar DeLeon would add a game-ending finish, scoring a 3-yard touchdown with no time remaining in the game. Thus, Elkton secured its berth in the 2026 OSAA State Championship game against the third ranked Jordan Valley Mustangs, who arrive with a 9-1 overall record, and a surprising 41-6 rout over the second ranked Griswold Grizzlies last Saturday at Baker High School.

So that's sets up an interesting State Title game next weekend at Summit High School in Bend, the season long top ranked Elks and the red-hot Mustangs. Any bets on the conversations around the Thanksgiving table this Thursday in Elkton and Jordan Valley??

Thanksgiving Week Table Set Turkey Day, Then State Football Championship Weekend

You can rest assured the conversation around the Thanksgiving table this week in fourteen different communities will approach the topic of football. Sure, there will be those Beaver and Duck debates over a different roasted bird, but for those fourteen high school football teams and fans qualified and ready to rumble for their respective State Football Championship games the following Saturday, there ain't no doubt, the choice of dessert will be made on a neutral field Saturday afternoon.

The Class 1A six-man football game featuring the Elkton Elks, 11-0, and the Jordan Valley Mustangs, 9-1, will start the action at 1:00 pm at Summit High School in Bend.

The Class 2A Title game will follow at 4:30 pm with the powerhouse Heppner Mustangs, 12-0, running full tilt into the St. Paul Buckaroos, 11-1, and you can bet your spurs that'll be a rodeo.

Stepping back to the Class 1A eight-man Championship, the second ranked Adrian Antelopes, 11-0, travel to Hermiston to line up against the Dufur Rangers, 10-1, whose only loss was a season opening non-league, 20-46 defeat courtesy of a team out of DeSales, WA. That game kicks off at 4:30 pm. Earlier in the day at Hermiston, the Class 3A Championship will be decided between the number one ranked Vale Vikings, who have thus far run the table and sport a 11-0 record and the 10-2 Burns Highlanders. These two Class 3A Special District 5 League members are very familiar with one another. Vale crushed Burns 42-0 back on October 23 at Vale. Whether or not a neutral field helps or a grudge attitude for that matter, one would have to figure the Vikings the odds-on favorite in this game. That being said, the swords will clash and ring, with the State crown up for grabs.

The State's Class 4A Title game will be held at Cottage Grove on Saturday with a 2:30 kickoff. Top-ranked Cascade Christian, sporting a unblemished 12-0 record will toe up to 11-1 Scappoose. This Cascade Christian Challengers team has yet to be challenged significantly this season, yet, having routed every opponent it faced. But the Indians of Scappoose aren't any slouches either and likewise have dominated all their opponents along the way, except for one.

Cascade Christian upended the Indians, 35-7, in an early season non-league game. Nothing like knowing your opponent!

The last venue to host the State Championship games is the Hillsboro Stadium, where the State's big schools punch it out on Championship Saturday. The Class 6A powerhouses, both representing the Three Rivers League, have no qualms about going toe to toe.

Lake Oswego is the favorite, entering the fray at 12-0 and bragging about defeating the 10-2 West Linn Lions, 21-7, earlier on October 9, in League play. Lions versus Lakers, all you Beaver and Duck fans will want to keep track of this one.

Lastly and deservedly not the least, the Class 5A State Championship game will follow at Hillsboro Stadium, kick off scheduled for under the lights at 5:30 pm. This game will feature two teams that are not ranked one or two.

Third ranked West Albany upset second ranked Thurston last weekend and sports a 10-2 record. Thurston had defeated the Bulldogs in a non-league game early on in the season, September 4, 31-8, so the defeat left a sour taste in the Colts mouth this Thanksgiving.

Nonetheless, it will be West Albany versus the Wildcats of Wilsonville, who punched their ticket with an impressive upset win over the Class 5A top-ranked Silverton Foxes. How impressive, well the Bulldogs routed the fifth ranked Foxes, 40-26. Want to bet on an underdog in this game. Pick one, you have a choice.

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A Season of Gratitude: The People Who Make McKenzie Special

By Lane Tompkins
Superintendent
McKenzie Schools

As Thanksgiving approaches, I want to take a moment to reflect on the many things we have to be thankful for here at McKenzie. During a busy school year, it's easy to focus on the next deadline, the next event, or the next challenge. Thanksgiving provides a welcome opportunity to slow down, appreciate the people around us, and recognize the many contributions that make our school and community such a special place.

One of the things I've always appreciated about working in a small rural school district is the sense of community that surrounds our students. McKenzie is more than a school building. It is a place where generations of families have learned, worked, volunteered, and supported one another. That connection between our school and the McKenzie Valley is something we should never take for granted.

Thankful for the People Behind Our School

First and foremost, I'm thankful for our students. They are the reason we do this work, and they bring energy, curiosity, humor, and enthusiasm to our campus every day. Watching students discover new interests, overcome challenges, develop friendships, and grow into young adults is one of the most rewarding parts of working in education.

I'm equally thankful for our teachers and staff. Providing a quality education requires far more than what happens in a classroom. Our teachers spend countless hours preparing lessons, supporting individual students, and finding ways to make learning meaningful. Our educational assistants, office staff, bus drivers, custodians, maintenance personnel, food service staff, and other employees all play essential roles in making sure our school operates safely and effectively.

In a small district like ours, people often go beyond their usual duties to help wherever they are needed. Whether it's covering for a colleague, helping organize an event, or staying late to support a student, these everyday acts of service make a tremendous difference.

I'm also grateful for our coaches and activity advisors, who provide opportunities for students to discover their talents, develop leadership skills, and build relationships beyond the classroom. Much of this work happens after the regular school day, and it represents a meaningful investment in our young people.

I also want to thank the McKenzie School District Board of Directors. Our board members volunteer their time to serve our students and community, often spending evenings reviewing information, attending meetings, and making decisions that shape the future of our district. Their work involves balancing the needs of students, staff, families, and taxpayers while providing oversight and direction for our schools. I'm thankful for their willingness to serve, their thoughtful leadership, and their commitment to helping McKenzie students learn and grow.

A Community That Shows Up

Our families are another reason McKenzie is special. Thank you to the parents, grandparents, and caregivers who get students ready for school, help with homework, attend conferences, encourage participation, and work alongside our staff when challenges arise. Our students benefit when families and school staff work together, and I'm grateful for the many ways you show up for them.

Beyond our school families, we are fortunate to have community members, local businesses, and organizations that support McKenzie in countless ways. Some volunteer their time, while others provide resources or share their expertise. Many make a point of attending school events and encouraging our students.

I especially appreciate that our school continues to matter to people throughout the McKenzie Valley, including those who no longer have children attending McKenzie or who may never have had students enrolled here. A strong community school belongs to the entire community, and that sense of shared ownership is one of our greatest strengths.

We have certainly faced challenges over the years, both as a school district and as a community. Yet again and again, the people of the McKenzie Valley have demonstrated a willingness to come together, help their neighbors, and support our young people. That spirit of generosity and resilience is something for which I am deeply thankful.

Looking Ahead With Gratitude

As we continue through the second quarter, our commitment remains to ensure that every student is Known. Valued. Challenged. Prepared. Achieving that commitment takes all of us. It requires dedicated educators, supportive families, engaged community members, and students who are willing to learn and grow.

Thanksgiving is also a reminder that gratitude is more than saying thank you. It is recognizing the value of others and finding ways to contribute in return. Those are lessons worth sharing with our students throughout the school year.

Around McKenzie This Week

McKenzie students and staff are enjoying a break from classes this week in observance of the Thanksgiving holiday. Our only scheduled athletic contest is middle school boys basketball traveling to Redmond to take on Central Christian at 3:30 p.m. Best of luck to our Eagles!

As we take time away from school to celebrate Thanksgiving, I hope everyone has an opportunity to rest, reconnect with family and friends, and enjoy the things that make this season meaningful.

On behalf of McKenzie School District, thank you for the many ways you support our students and our school. I am grateful to be part of a community that cares so deeply about its young people and their future.

Wishing everyone throughout the McKenzie Valley a safe, restful, and happy Thanksgiving!

Guest Opinion

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go uncollected are the result of tax filers underreporting their income, meaning that they did not include in their tax return all of the income they made. Besides underreporting, the other drivers of the tax gap are underpayment, when the tax filer fails to pay all of the taxes owed and nonfiling, when someone fails to file a required tax return.

To be clear, not everyone who fails to follow the rules is cheating. The tax system is complex. Noncompliance runs on a spectrum, from honest filers who miss a deadline or don't know a rule applies to them, to taxpayers whose sloppy recordkeeping causes accidental underreporting, to people who hide income in their "deceased mother's trust," like JW Millegan.

While those who don't comply with the tax rules can be found at all levels of income, it's clear that the higher up the income ladder you go, the bigger the problem gets. Nearly all of the earnings of low- and middle-income families come in the form of wages. Independent reporting of income, such as your employer directly sending wage information to the IRS, makes cheating difficult and rare.

That's not the case with other forms of income that mainly flow to the well-off. There is a lot less independent reporting of income derived from businesses and assets. In Connecticut, one of the few other states to study the question, the richest 5% of taxpayers accounted for 46% of the underpayment gap; the bottom half accounted for less than 10%.

The bottom line is that there's a fair amount of taxes owed that aren't being paid, and the rich and the large corporations they own account for the largest share of those unpaid taxes.

Beefing up enforcement would seem the obvious move, but strangely, Oregon lawmakers did the opposite recently. They cut positions for auditors, revenue agents, and collections. That is penny-wise and pound-foolish.

Oregon could definitely use more revenue right now. In the past two legislative sessions, lawmakers cut programs that help people stay housed, fed, and able to get medical care. Now, the state faces a grim financial picture due to increased costs to maintain the Oregon Health Plan and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which provide health insurance and food assistance to struggling Oregonians, following the deep cuts to those services enacted by Congress last year.

Oregon also needs to make it easier for people trying to comply with their tax obligations but who make an error or miss a deadline. The state can provide more resources to the Tax Infrastructure Grant Program, which funds community organizations providing free tax preparation to low-income Oregonians; strengthen the Oregon Department of Revenue's taxpayer services; and continue building Direct File Oregon, an online portal where Oregonians can file their tax returns for free.

Shrinking the tax gap should be a key priority for lawmakers in the upcoming session, as it would allow the state to better fund key services without raising anyone's taxes. Oregon needs to do a better job cracking down on cheats like JW Millegan, while also making it easier for those trying to file their taxes properly to do so. It's both a matter of fairness and common sense.

Daniel Hauser is the deputy director of the Oregon Center for Public Policy and leads the center's tax policy work. He earned his master's degree in public policy at Oregon State University and has been a campaign manager, dishwasher and security guard in the past. Daniel has written book chapters and academic journal articles but would rather spend his time with his family.

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Businesses Grants

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Matt McRae

2020 fire and had a physical business location within the Holiday Farm Fire footprint.

They also had to document fire-related damage and demonstrate measurable negative impacts on business revenue after the disaster.

As McRae explains, "federally required environmental reviews for construction projects can take six to nine months and carry substantial administrative expenses."

Excluding construction activities, he added, was designed to steer more of the available funding toward immediate business recovery needs instead of taking the lengthy environmental review processes.

The McKenzie Valley Long Term Recovery Group's other recovery accomplishments include distributing $2.2 million to 185 survivor households through its Unmet Needs Program, providing 13 manufactured homes valued at more than $2 million through its Rapid Rehousing Program, and helping deliver more than $2.5 million in preliminary awards through the ReOregon Homeowner Assistance and Rehabilitation Program.

The organization has also launched an initiative to restore affordable rental housing by placing accessory dwelling units on rural private properties after the disaster. Rebuilding homes and infrastructure remains a major part of the recovery effort, but the Small Business Recovery Fund recognizes that restoring the valley's economic foundation is essential as well.

For the 11 grant recipients, McRae said, the funding offers a chance to replace lost equipment, retain employees, strengthen operations and keep providing services that support residents and visitors throughout the McKenzie River Valley.

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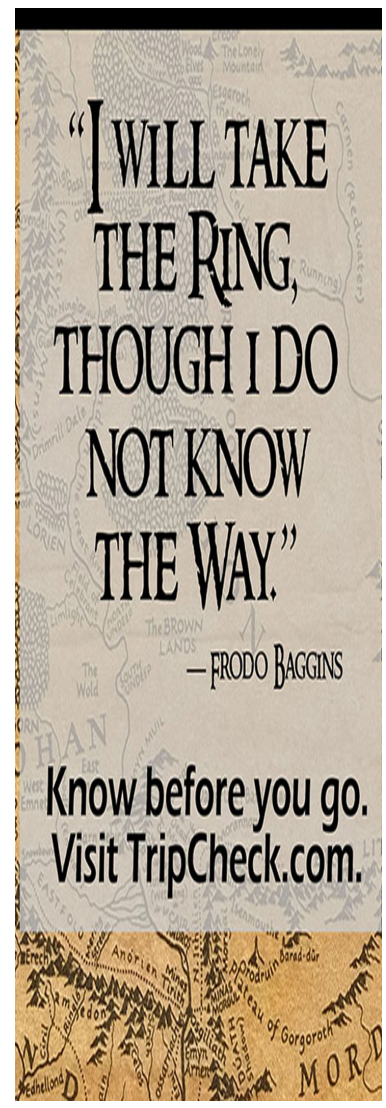

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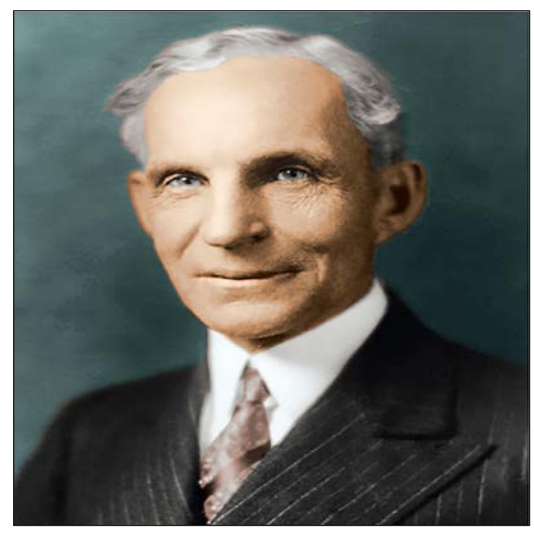

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