



Delivering targeted news for the McKenzie Valley community since 1978

OSP Reports

Driver of one vehicle stopped in the highway, pointed a handgun at two individuals, exchanged some words, and left the scene

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Decorative greenery

Traditional holiday arrangements are full of scented or berried evergreens

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Briefs...

12/14 & 12/15 Annual Vida McKenzie Community Center Christmas Bazaar



The event, at the Waltherville Grange drew crowds of both attendees and booths.



Handcrafted items were among the highlights.



Austin Loshbaugh, Student Ethan Hyder, Student Maria Hernandez, and Carmen Pierce of McKenzie Fire & Rescue were only part of the crowd that turned out for holiday festivities this weekend.



Community support has helped preserve the Grange building.



Some gift shoppers found purchase pre-wrapped was an option.

A site to mark the Holiday Farm Fire? Site under consideration is close to where 2020 blaze began

RAINBOW: A one-acre parcel barely a quarter mile from the ignition site could become a memorial to the Holiday Farm Fire, according to a recent study. The site of the proposed memorial is located on unused USDA Forest Service land at the junction of Highway 126 and the west end of McKenzie River Drive.

In their proposal submitted to the McKenzie River Chamber of Commerce, University of Oregon students Rachel Benbrook, Meghan Doremus, and Elise O'Brien note the lot also includes a historic piece of the old McKenzie River Hwy. and seems to be a former homestead, judging by river rock features like an old retaining wall and a large chimney.

The chimney was obscured by brush until the Holiday Farm Fire, revealed after the event, could become a built-in focal point of the site. It is also highly visible from the highway but could be accessed via McKenzie River Drive to avoid impeding traffic on the highway. "It would attract travelers going between Eugene and Bend, bringing their spending money into the communities of McKenzie River,"

[Memorial site - Page 10](#)



An artist's rendering of a suggested feature that would include the rock chimney marking the spot where a home once stood.

\$1 million for wildfire resiliency projects McKenzie Fire will use federal grant funds to support fuels reduction work



Stands of flame ravaged trees still remain throughout the McKenzie River area as reminders of this decade's increasing wildfire dangers.

EUGENE: The Eugene Water & Electric Board (EWB) recently received a \$1 million federal grant for the U.S. Forest Service's Community Wildfire Defense Grant program. The money will be used in partnership with McKenzie Fire & Rescue, Eugene Springfield Fire to support fuel reduction, and the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) to work on a "landscape-scale" in high-risk areas in the McKenzie River Valley and Eugene's South Hills.

McKenzie Fire & Rescue has been awarded \$325,000 in the funding package. "This grant will be used to assist qualified homeowners in the Cedar Flats and Deerhorn areas, focusing on reducing hazardous fuels within 100 feet of private residences and improving access," according to McKenzie Fire & Rescue Chief Darren Bucich.

The initiative is part of a broader strategy to mitigate wildfire hazards believed to be tied to climate change and to support community safety through strategic investments in infrastructure and emergency preparedness.

[Wildfire resiliency - Page 13](#)

Oregon is addressing housing crisis

Dept. of Land Conservation and Development supports increased home building and affordability

SALEM: At its December meeting, the Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC) unanimously adopted the first set of rules Oregon will use to implement what it calls "comprehensive, system-wide housing planning reforms to address the state's housing crisis."

The adopted rules direct the approaches and methods local governments will use to reverse decades of underinvestment in housing production and meet community needs.

The new rules require local governments to use standardized methods to determine local housing needs and adopt accountability measures to track local progress toward housing targets. Technical assistance, funding, and other resources from the state will be available to help local governments meet their housing goals.

Other measures will reduce the legal vulnerability and encourage community engagement required of housing policies to address the needs of marginalized and underserved groups.

The second phase of rulemaking will seek clarity and certainly in how cities assess the capacity of land within an

urban growth boundary to meet their community's housing needs. The third phase will include the development of a suite of adoption-ready actions and other resources local governments can use to address housing needs. Officials said, "The three phases of rulemaking, concluding before January 2026, will result in Oregon's most significant housing reform in decades."

To address statewide needs, the Oregon Legislature charged the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) in House Bill 2001 (2023) with developing rules that chart a new direction to meet housing needs more fully and equitably.

"The level of effort and care that our commission, staff, and partners have taken with these rules is a testament to our collective desire to serve Oregonians," said Brenda Ortigoza Bateman, DLCD Director. "These rules will help Oregon communities accurately identify and characterize housing needs. Meeting that need through housing production will require a multi-disciplinary effort involving infrastructure and development-ready land, local government staffing capacity, and access to capital."

"It is truly rewarding to reach this important milestone, having witnessed the immense efforts devoted to this process over the last two years," said Anyeley Hallova, LCDC Chair. "As a real estate developer, I'm keenly

[Housing crisis - Page 14](#)



“LINN COUNTY PAPERS IN CRISIS

One outlet shuts this week, while another teeters”

Those were the bad news headlines in the Corvallis Gazette-Times this week.

The article explained that the 188-year-old Brownsville Times newspaper had published a paper the week before and was quietly shuttered.

The story from the Sweet Home New Era was that its former publishers had to take back the reins and were contemplating whether the 95-year-old publication would continue to exist after the end of December.

As most readers know, River Reflections faced a similar fate back in 2022 when the costs of printing and mailing a weekly newspaper ballooned beyond what was sustainable. So, I know the gut-wrenching feeling these other owners are now going through.

What you don't know is that back in the '22 crisis, the two papers I just referred to, along with the Fern Ridge-Tribune in Veneta and River Reflections, pooled our resources to move our printing to a web press plant in McMinnville. Every week, that press would send a truck down Interstate 5 to meet

one of us to pick up bundles of all four publications and shuttle us to our different offices.

That process was just another checkmark to add to my tally of reasons for changing from a legacy, print-based publication to a primarily digital weekly one. The fact that the number of subscribers dropped by only 3% supports that decision as a good one.

In November 1922, the Tribune News's publisher died, and so did the paper. Today, from our group of four, only the New Era and Reflections remain in business.

I'm writing to ask for your help. No, this isn't a plea to send financial support (although I wouldn't turn it down). I'm requesting that you respond the next time you read, listen to, or watch a story about "Newspapers are dying."

Please get in touch with the newspaper, radio/TV station, or website wherever the story appears. Tell them they need to balance their "news" because you know of a publication showing a way to buck those negative trends.

Why? Because I want more publishers to contact McKenzie River Reflections so I can share what's worked with this publication.

This week, I talked with the publisher of the New Era, who wants to learn more about what I've been doing. Let's hope there's more out there - before it's too late.



Guest Opinion

Let public opinion, not the Supreme Court, curb social media

By Gene Policinski

The U.S. Supreme Court will now step into the national debate about regulating social media, a move that might be popular but is the wrong one at the wrong time – and maybe for all time.

The court has agreed to hear a challenge to Section 230 of the

Communications Decency Act, seeking to limit – or even remove – a federal law that gives tech companies sweeping immunity from lawsuits over user-generated content and how social media company algorithms surface that posted content.

The justices will consider a lawsuit against Google brought by the family of a man killed in a 2015 terrorist attack in Paris. The family contends that Google, which

owns YouTube, was partially responsible because it had allowed the terrorist group to post radicalizing videos that appeared in some users' video feeds, along with the site's algorithm-generated recommendations to other users.

Polls show that we want Big Tech to step up more to battle misinformation and disinformation and to answer critics who say social media outlets favor a particular side on social issues.

But the likely outcome from any significant weakening of Section 230 and social media First Amendment rights by the high court will be equally significant limits on our free speech and free press rights. What company would open its electronic turf to virtually anyone, knowing that a single post among millions each day from users could bring an expensive lawsuit?

Better that we hold those companies accountable in the courts of public opinion and the commercial marketplace than in courts of law.

When we exercise our own free speech rights, we step up as the kind of engaged citizens envisioned by the founders when they enacted such strong bulwarks around our core freedoms.

Deal with dissatisfaction by not using Facebook or Twitter or Google or Truth Social, for that matter. If you don't like how a platform deals with abusive posts or blatant propaganda or fails to act on deliberate misinformation, step up and support alternatives or start-up competitors.

Demand that tech companies find better ways to implement transparent standards that they

– not the government – create to apply to the massive amounts of posts they receive. Delete your account if the online operation won't be transparent about how their algorithms or human moderators make decisions about what, when and who to suspend or block.

These First Amendment-friendly approaches don't require government intrusion into the speech and press rights of private companies.

If the high court does decide to amend Section 230, let's hope it tweaks rather than trashes. Some options for limited change could include allowing liability for intentional editorial decisions by Big Tech, like failing to act on clearly dangerous misinformation regard-

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McKenzie Eagles Sports Report



By Cliff Richardson

McKenzie Varsity Sports Schedule This Week

The McKenzie Boys and Girls Varsity Basketball teams host Chiloquin on Tuesday, December 17. The Girls game tips off at 5:00 pm and the Boys start at 6:30 pm.

The McKenzie Athletic Department will host the McKenzie Winter Classic with the Glendale Girls playing against host McKenzie on Friday, December 20; game time is 5:30 pm. The Glendale/McKenzie Boys game will follow at 7:00 pm.

Saturday, December 21, the McKenzie Girls play Yoncalla at 1:00 pm and the Eagle Boys follow versus Yoncalla at 2:30 pm.

Tough Week For McKenzie Boys Basketball -Eagles Still Search For First Victory

A couple of almost wins and a couple of not even close defeats marked the past busy week on the hardwoods for McKenzie Varsity Boys Head Coach Neil Barrett's Eagle team. And all contests were on the road.

First up was Riverside, WLWV Junior Varsity, up North in West Linn, on Monday, December 19. McKenzie gave it a good go, and almost had the opportunity to carve a notch, but unfortunately fell to the home Raptors, 56-58.

A couple of days recuperation and practice sessions, found the Eagles, on Thursday, December 12, over in the big city of Lowell

and facing an old rival, the Red Devils. Once again, the boys in the Green and Gold fired up the Devils home court, playing tough and rough, but, once again, falling just short with a 57-59 defeat.

A short night and it was road trip all over, only this time, a long ride to the Southern Oregon Coast, as in Gold Beach Friday, December 13, where McKenzie toed up to the Panthers, who at the time were undefeated. And this time the Eagles fell with a swoop, 28-57, in the OSAA Endowment contest.

The next afternoon, Saturday, December 14, since they were in the general area, visited the Myrtle Point Bobcat squad and found those cats no friendlier than the last group, losing again big, 24-57.

McKenzie Girls Drop Three Last Week

The Eagle Girls Varsity Basketball team didn't find the

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McKenzie River Reflections



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WEATHER REPORT

READINGS TAKEN AT THE US ARMY CORPS COUGAR DAM

READINGS TAKEN AT THE EWEB LEABURG POWERHOUSE

Date	High	Low	Rain	Releases	Date	High	Low	Rain	Riverflow
12/10	34	43	0	558 cfs	12/10	50	30	0	3,550 cfs
12/11	33	43	0	558 cfs	12/11	37	29	0	3,220 cfs
12/12	40	43	0.23	558 cfs	12/12	45	36	0.27	3,220 cfs
12/13	36	42	0.89	401 cfs	12/13	47	36	0.12	3,100 cfs
12/14	39	43	0.38	410 cfs	12/14	44	40	1.04	4,050 cfs
12/15	36	42	0.69	NA	12/15	45	38	0.71	4,400 cfs
12/16	37	43	1.11	427 cfs	12/16	47	38	0.47	5,110 cfs

Friday 12/20

McKenzie Valley Cloudy
20% chance precip
High: 52 Low: 44

Santiam Pass Cloudy
20% chance precip
High: 40 Low: 30

Saturday 12/21

McKenzie Valley Light Rain
70% chance precip
High: 52 Low: 47

Santiam Pass Rain/Snow
80% chance precip
High: 38 Low: 28

Sunday 12/22

McKenzie Valley Rain
70% chance precip
High: 52 Low: 48

Santiam Pass Rain/Snow
70% chance precip
High: 37 Low: 33

Sheriff's Report

Dec. 9: 5:41 p.m: Suspicious Conditions - 54700 blk, Caddis Ln. A caller reported a vehicle missing, but did not answer a callback by a deputy.

Dec. 10: 3:52 p.m: Assist, Follow Up - 49700 blk, McK. Hwy.

4:10 p.m: Unlawful Use of Vehicle - Blue River Reservoir Rd.

4:18 p.m: Assist Fire Department - McK. Hwy.

5:18 p.m: Assist, Follow Up - 54700 blk, Caddis Ln.

Dec. 11: 2:46 p.m: Fraud - 41000 blk, McK. Hwy. A resident's bank account was hacked online and money stolen.

Dec. 11: 11:06 a.m: Fraud - 89900 blk, Greenwood Dr. A fraudulent listing was made for a rental property, and was discovered by the owner.

12:13 p.m: Civil Enforcement - 90700 blk, Hill Rd.

1:56 p.m: Child Abuse -

McK. Hwy. A deputy responded to a report of child abuse and determined the report was unfounded.

Dec. 12: 1:11 p.m: Motor Vehicle Accident, No Injury - Marcola Rd.

Dec. 13: 8:06 a.m: Gunshot Wound - 39300 blk, Walterville Ln. Deputies responded to a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

4:22 p.m: Citizen Contact - 56600 blk, McK. Hwy.

Dec. 14: 9:40 a.m: Vehicle Stop - Marcola Rd.

3:44 p.m: Suspicious Vehicle - 40300 blk, Tonga Ln. A white VW Tiguan was observed driving through the neighborhood and stopping in front of houses.

6:40 p.m: Reckless Driving - McK. Hwy. Milepost 31.

9:32 p.m: Motor Vehicle Accident, DUII - 37100 blk, Parsons Creek Rd.

Dec. 15: 3:59 p.m: Vehicle In Ditch - Aufderheide Dr.

5:15 p.m: Recover Stolen Vehicle - 37000 blk, Parsons Creek Rd.

6:27 p.m: Vehicle Stop - 38800 blk, McK. Hwy.

Dec. 15: 5:58 a.m: Alarm - 39200 blk, McK. Hwy.

1:59 p.m: Disturbance, Dispute - 39300 blk, Walterville Ln.

3:59 p.m: Vehicle in Ditch - Aufderheide Dr.

5:15 p.m: Recover Stolen Vehicle - 37000 blk, Parsons Creek Rd.

6:23 p.m: Illegal Fireworks - 88300 blk, Thienes Ln.

6:47 p.m: Attempt To Locate Drunk Driver - 38400 blk, McK. Hwy.

8:06 p.m: Shots Fired - 88200 blk, Miller Ave.

Dec. 16: 11:25 a.m: Suspicious Conditions - 45600 blk, McK. Hwy.

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

State Police Report

Dec. 14: 18:35: Menacing - Hwy. 126E, Milepost 2. Two vehicles were eastbound. Possible road rage incident occurred where the driver of one vehicle stopped in the highway, pointed a handgun at two individuals, exchanged some words, and left the scene. The driver of the vehicle was located by a Bend trooper, where the male was taken into custody and a weapon was seized. The vehicle was towed. The driver was taken to the Lane County Jail where he was

lodged on the crimes of Menacing x 2, Unlawful Us of a Weapon x 2, and Reckless Driving. Involved: white Toyota Tacoma. Arrested: Dallas Lee Soon, 45-years-old, from Redmond.

Dec. 15: 08:07: Crash, Non-Injury - Hwy. 126E, Mp. 15. Responded to a single vehicle crash. The driver of Unit #1, a blue Jeep Compass, went off the roadway into a ditch and came to rest back on the highway on its top. The driver was not injured but the eastbound lanes were blocked. The driver stated he fell asleep at the wheel. The driver was cited for violations. ODOT responded to open the roadway and a tow responded for the vehicle. Involved: 42-year-old male from Eugene.

McKenzie Fire & Rescue

Dec. 9: 13:56: McK. Hwy. Milepost 13. Motor Vehicle Accident, Non-Injury, Non-Blocking.

22:19: 44000 block, McK. Hwy. Structure Fire. Smoke from Fireplace, Homeowner Confirmed.

Dec. 10: 11:49: 1300 blk, 66th St. Medical, General. Patient Assessed, 1 Transported.

16:00: 51000 blk, McK. Hwy. Medical, General. Patient Assessed, 1 Transported.

18:38: 7000 blk, Thurston Rd.

Medical, General. Disregarded En Route.

21:42: 600 blk, S. 79th St. Trash Fire. Disregarded.

Dec. 11: 0:04: 56000 blk, McK. Hwy. Medical, General. Assisted Upper McKenzie.

Dec. 12: 15:04: 88000 blk, Partridge Ln Medical, Trauma. Patient Assessed, 1 Transported.

21:44: 44000 blk, McK. Hwy. Flue Fire. Fire Extinguished.

Dec. 13: 8:05: 39000 blk, Walterville Ln. Medical, Trauma. Disregarded By LCSO.

19:37: 88000 blk, Millican Rd Medical, General. Patient Assessed, Refusal Obtained.

22:09: 41000 blk, McK. Hwy. Medical, Trauma. Patient Assessed, 1 Transported.

Dec. 15: 8:04: 40000 blk, McK. Hwy MVA. Non-Injury/Blocking.

16:28: 40000 blk, McK. Hwy. Medical, General. Patient Assessed, Refusal Obtained.

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

Dec. 10: 23:46: Medical - 56000 block, N. Bank Rd. Male, Conscious, Breathing.

Need to talk? Call 988

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\$2.6 million party highlighted Oregon's "age of innocence"

By Finn J.D. John

One of the real privileges of being a lifelong Oregonian of a certain, er, vintage, is the opportunity to have seen this state in its golden age — roughly, 1946 through 1980 — through a child's eyes.

The basic style and culture of the Beaver State have changed a lot over the last 50 years. And, for the most part, it's changed for the better ... but not entirely.

Sociologists would say this change was the transition from a "modernist" culture — proud, conformist, and optimistic about the future — to a "postmodernist" culture — self-critical, eclectic, and neutral or pessimistic about the future. A similar change happened nationwide during that time.

But Oregon is a special case, because two unique things happened here to highlight and accelerate this culture shift:

At the high point of postwar Modern Oregon, the state (1) threw a \$2.6 million party to celebrate. Which gave Oregonians something solid to look back on a few decades later, when (2) the money ran out.

The result — well, let's explore it from the perspective of my imaginary friend Fred. (Technically, Fred is a composite character. I have crafted him from aspects of a bunch of different people I know, including myself.)

By the time "Imaginary Fred" graduated from Molalla High School in 1963, he already had a part-time job "pulling green chain" at the big sawmill south of town, on the way to Wilhoit Springs. It paid well enough for Fred to build an old '39 Ford into a sweet hot rod to drive to school, with enough left to buy a pretty decent-sized rock to put on the left hand of his high-school sweetheart, Wilma.

After graduation, Fred moved up to a full-time job at the mill driving a straddle truck. It paid well enough to support Wilma and eventually three kids, along with a nice little fishing boat to take on camping trips at nearby mountain lakes, and a new Chevrolet Nova every three years to pull it with.

Fred briefly thought about going to college; he had the grades and the brains for it. But, life was good. He was living in a sportsman's paradise, working a job that asked a lot physically but left his mind free to wander, surrounded by salt-of-the-earth neighbors and plugged into a good church community. Maybe next year, he'd think.

Now, fast forward to 1989. Fred is living and working in Estacada



Salem Public Libraries
A representative of the helicopter-logging company Sky King stands next to his company's brand-new 1959 Buick looking at an exhibit of an enormous old-growth log at the Centennial Exposition.

now. The small independent sawmill where he's working as a shift foreman has been struggling. Environmental regulations, especially habitat protections for the Northern Spotted Owl, have virtually shut down logging on public lands. Big outfits like Weyerhaeuser and Willamette Industries are still doing all right, because they own their own forests; but little independent outfits that bid on timber sales in state forests and school lands are gasping for air, and local governments are really feeling the pinch as these revenue streams dry up. Times are tough.

Fred, of course, has strong views on this. His '87 Chevy Celebrity has bumper stickers on it reading "I love spotted owls, broiled" and "Save a logger, eat an owl."

It feels good to Fred to express himself this way, but it's cold comfort now because he's just got word that the mill is closing. Fred has made a few phone calls, but he knows the music has stopped and anybody who has a chair to sit down in will be hanging onto it for dear life. He's going to have to find a completely new job, in a completely new industry, basically starting over. And he's 45 years old, with three kids, and a wife who's never had to take a job.

A few months later, Fred and Wilma are starting to see a path. Wilma has a part-time job at Michaelo's Pizza in Molalla, which helps; Fred is making a little over minimum wage working for Dickenson's Thriftway. He's working full-time, graveyard shifts, and attending classes at Mt. Hood Community College during the day. He's hoping that will open some doors. Even so, the family is just barely getting by.

Then the next year's property-

tax bill comes for their house, and it's a big increase. It breaks their carefully balanced family budget into tiny pieces. The local school district, faced with a sharp shortfall in stumpage fees from canceled logging operations on its school lands, is trying to keep the doors open with a hefty property-tax increase.

A furious Fred, exhausted and middle-aged and facing a real threat of foreclosure on his family home, is absolutely ready to vote "yes" on Ballot Measure 5, the controversial ballot initiative that would cap property taxes and require the state government to shift money around to cover shortfalls in school districts like theirs.

When Election Day comes, he's very motivated to go and vote for it.

But on his way to the ballot box, Fred stops in at a pawnshop. He's got two hunting rifles — his dad's old .25-35, and a sleek Winchester Model 70 in .270 that he bought new in 1963 with his first big paycheck at the mill. Right now he needs the cash more than the memories, so he's looking to sell the .270 to make his next mortgage payment.

While the broker is looking over the rifle, Fred casts an eye over the coin counter. There, on the top shelf, priced to sell at a whopping ten cents, is something that takes him back.

It's a large coin, dull bronze in color. Around the outer rim he sees the words, "Oregon Centennial 1859-1959."

He remembers when he had a pocket full of those coins. They were worth 50 cents in trade around his home town. They were a big part of the Oregon

Centennial Celebration, which Fred remembers well; he was 13 years old at the time.

Fred remembers the Oregon Centennial as the high-water mark of Oregon's postwar modernist culture. Fred and all his neighbors geared up for it a year or two ahead of time. The Centennial coins were a big part of that.

Preparations for it had started four years earlier, Fred happens to know, because his fourth-grade civics teacher, Mr. D'Addio, was very excited about it. The Oregon State Legislature had allocated \$2.6 million for the party.

"You can throw one humdinger of a wingding with 2.6 big ones," said Mr. D'Addio.

The next year Mr. D'Addio got appointed to the Molalla area Centennial Committee. The committee started raising funds and awareness right away, and one of the best tools they had for that was a minting of bronze coins like the one Fred is now looking at.

Fred remembers cashing in all his allowance money for Centennial Tokens, which he spent at businesses around town. They were about the size of a half-dollar, and made of bronze. People called them "so-called dollars." He wishes he'd hung onto one, but of course, being 11 or 12 at the time, he spent them as fast as he got them. They had to be spent before Feb. 14, 1959 — the actual date, 100 years and zero days after Oregon officially became a state.

As the day drew near, everyone in town got more and more excited about it. Fred's eighth-grade class created big posters on butcher paper festooned with covered wagons and proud pioneers and happy-looking Indians, which were hung in the halls of Molalla Elementary School.

Then came the big day. President Dwight Eisenhower made a proclamation. Vice-President Richard Nixon appeared with Oregon Governor Mark Hatfield at the state Capitol, which was dusted with a surprise late-season snow, and had a 19-gun salute fired in his honor with 105-mm Howitzers. The ceremonies were opened by the Oregon Symphony. Members of the National Guard stood at attention. Fred watched it all on his family's new color TV.

At a Grand Centennial Ball in Salem, the movers and shakers of the state gathered for a tony party replete with a cake shaped like the state Capitol building, with pictures of a bridge, power lines and log truck in the frosting. Fred didn't get invited to that — it was a bit above his pay grade — but [\\$2.6 million party - Page 14](#)



By Slim Randles

It's natural to mumble nasty things about the cold weather. We all do it from time to time. But even the cold has its merits.

One big plus is that it makes fireplaces a reasonable addition to our lives. In cold weather, we can build a fire in our home with a clear conscience. This is something that doesn't translate well to summer heat, but when it's cold, here comes the fire. Strange, isn't it, our love affair with a fireplace? Makes absolutely no sense. Today, we can make houses so impervious to cold that every time we light a candle, the temperature goes up ten degrees. So what do we do? We cut a hole in this sealed anti-cold unit so we can sit and look at the flames, the way our ancestors have done since they learned to walk upright and invented kindling.

But we don't care. We'll spend a lot of extra money to buy a house with a fireplace, and not think a thing about it. Because this fireplace is the spiritual center of a home, as it's always been. It's the gathering place. It's the place to read, to learn, to meet and tell stories. It's the core of our universe. The fireplace — and those waiting for us there — is what we dream about when we're miles from home in the woods or desert. It warms us, inside and out, cooks our food, and answers our questions.

Questions? Sure.

When the fire's burning low, and you can just see the little blue lickem flames curling around the glowing embers late at night, and when we've about talked out the day's adventures, we can look at those embers and find answers to questions we didn't even know we had. And we feel sorry for people who don't have these advantages.

Please consider buying "A Cowboy's Guide to Growing Up Right." Good advice from an aging cowboy ... me. Available on Amazon.com, among others.

Quote of the Week

"Snowflakes are one of nature's most fragile things, but just look what they can do when they stick together."

Vesta Kelly

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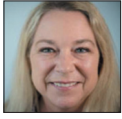
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Gardening Tips

By Kym Pokorny



Oregon State University

OSU Extension Service

Five types of decorative greenery



Lynn Ketchum

The holly tree or shrub is characterized by its bright red berries and thick, glossy, spiny-margined leaves.

Traditional holiday arrangements are full of scented or berried evergreens, among the few garden items available to us in the winter months. Each of these greens performs differently, both in an arrangement and in the landscape.

A closer look at some of the popular greens frequently used in these decorations provides insight into long-standing tradition as well as tips for using greenery in our modern homes. Records of bringing evergreens indoors during the winter months are recorded as far back as the Roman era, and over time have both pagan and Christian beliefs have been incorporated into the traditions surrounding these cheerful green reminders that spring is coming eventually.

Holly

One of the flowering evergreens, holly differs from other traditional holiday greenery in that it produces flowers and berries (technically called drupes) rather than cones. Holly has large, flat leaves instead of needles. Holly is dioecious, meaning there are separate male and female plants. Only female plants produce fruit.

Holly is dioecious, meaning there are separate male and female

plants. Only female plants produce fruit. Because of their large leaf surface, holly leaves will dry out faster than other greenery in an arrangement, so frequent misting is important to keep stems fresh after cutting. Be aware that English Holly, *Ilex aquifolium*, is invasive in coastal parts of Oregon, and may be considered a weed in those areas. Hundreds of holly cultivars exist, with fruit colors ranging from white to yellow to black — though red remains most popular.

Pine

Common pines in Eastern Oregon include ponderosa, lodgepole, and Western white pines. Because pines tend to drop lower branches as they grow, it's often easier to harvest usable pine boughs off of younger trees. Pine needles are found in bunches at the ends of stems, rather than singly all along a stem. Numbers of needles per bunch and pine cone characteristics are used to identify pine types.

In an arrangement, pine can sometimes be harder to use with the long needles. The needles can be trimmed to the desired length with scissors. The ends will not turn brown, and a little trimming can help retain the desired shape of an arrangement.

Fir

Softer than the spruces, fir is a common Christmas tree and arranging choice. Douglas fir is often lumped in with the true firs. Fir needles are usually softer to the touch than spruces and, therefore, easier on the hands of the arranger.

The cones of firs stick straight up on the tops of trees during the summer. Fir cones don't fall off the tree whole, but lose parts one by one while still on the tree. Therefore, it's unlikely to find lots of fir cones to harvest.

Firs have lovely evergreen fragrance and are graceful trees in the landscape.

False cedars

Common names for plants can be so confusing. All of the native trees called "cedars" in Oregon are not, botanically speaking, actual cedars. This nuance should not deter us from enjoying these plants in winter decorations. Incense cedar and Port Orford cedars are highly prized greens with amazing fragrance, sought after in the florist industry for that fragrance and their graceful, draping boughs with delicate needles.

False cedars are probably the easiest evergreens to use in vase arrangements since the needles will arch over the sides of the container rather than stick straight up as a fir or spruce branch would.

Juniper

Finally, a use for juniper! Junipers, which often have a blue or gray cast to the needles, provide texture and relief from solid green. Juniper cones look like berries, and are what gin is derived from.

Junipers are highly aromatic and will look good in an arrangement even if they have dried out significantly. Western juniper, also known as "the camel of trees", is especially good at finding water available in the soil, so the ability for the leaves to retain moisture is not a surprise. There is an abundance of juniper for the taking in eastern Oregon.

The best evergreen arrangements typically include multiple greenery types, and use texture and contrast effectively. Berries, cones, ribbon and bare branches can be added for additional interest.



Country Kitchen

By Mary Emma Allen



WINTER WONDERS MEMORIES

Do you remember making snow angels? Some snow time events never change with the generations because I recall lying in the snow and sweeping through it with legs and arms to create angels.

Snowmen, snow forts, games of fox and geese...these seem to transcend the ages and hold youngsters enthralled. Sliding down hill on playgrounds, in the yard, or nearby hills provide fun no matter how cold, it seems.

The wonder of winter and a world of snow become heightened when we share it with children. Even snow shoveling can include fun when a family does it together. I was going through some photos of my childhood, looking for those of snow activities to share with grandchildren.

The pictures of my brothers, sister and I throwing snowballs, shoveling snow and riding on the homemade snow plow my dad pulled behind his tractor brought back memories of days of snow long ago. This snowplow was V-shaped, with two cross planks connecting the sides. We would put grain bags on the boards and sit there while Father plowed the driveway, the barnyard, and a path to the chicken houses beyond the dairy barn.

There also was a photo of my grandfather and me as a toddler. We're each holding a shovel of snow. He died when I was only five years old, but fortunately my mom loved to take photos and I have this one in the snow to bring back memories of a family heritage.

Take Photos for Memories

Take photos of your youngsters in the snow; enjoy these times

whether it's snow fun at home, on the ski slopes, skating on a pond, or shoveling. They add to a family heritage and bring back the wonders that children see.

Hot chocolate and cookies often greeted us when we came into the house after activities in the snow. What do you serve? Or do you want a main dish ready when you come in from the cold?

BEEF & POTATO CASSEROLE

Arrange 4 cups raw, thinly sliced potatoes and 2 tablespoons chopped onion in a greased 2-quart baking dish or casserole. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Then mix together 1 pound ground beef, 3/4 cup evaporated milk (you can use regular milk), 1/2 cup fine cracker crumbs, bread crumbs, or uncooked rolled oats, 1/4 cup catsup, 1/4 cup chopped onion, 1/2 teaspoon salt, 1/4 teaspoon pepper.

Spread meat mixture evenly over the potatoes. Decorate with more catsup, if desired. Bake at 350 degrees F. for 1 hour until meat is cooked and potatoes are tender.

(You can substitute ground turkey or chicken if you prefer.)

(c) Mary Emma Allen

(Mary Emma Allen writes from her NH home. E-mail: me.allen@juno.com)

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Community Notes

AA Meetings

AA meetings are held on Wednesdays at 6 p.m. and Sundays at 5 p.m. at the McKenzie Valley Presbyterian Church in Walterville. plus in Blue River at 6 p.m. on Thursdays at the clinic on Dexter Street.

December 19

Leaburg Food Pantry

At the Leaburg Food Pantry, from 3 to 6:30 p.m. at the McKenzie Bible Fellowship, 45061 McKenzie Hwy. All are welcome! Please send folks!

December 19

McKenzie Chamber

The The McKenzie River Chamber of Commerce board will meet via zoom at 4:30 p.m. For more information contact: info@mckenziechamber.com

December 21

A Dime At A Time

The Bottle Boys are busy from 10 a.m. to noon at the Leaburg Store, 42840 McKenzie Hwy. for Saturday morning sorting sessions. Donations can be dropped off at the Leaburg Store and maybe help us bag up the containers! Funds from plastic, glass, and aluminum containers go toward the rebuilding of the O'Brien Memorial Library in Blue River, McKenzie River Clinic, and the Vida McKenzie Community Center - all destroyed in the Holiday Farm fire.

December 23

Spfd School Board

At The Board of Directors meets twice during most months during the school year. Regular business meetings begin at 7 p.m. on the second Monday of the month. Work sessions are generally held at 5:30 p.m. on the fourth Monday of the month. All meetings, unless

otherwise noted, are held in the Board Room of the Springfield office.

December 28

A Dime At A Time

The Bottle Boys are busy from 10 a.m. to noon at the Leaburg Store, 42840 McKenzie Hwy. for Saturday morning sorting sessions. Donations can be dropped off at the Leaburg Store and maybe help us bag up the containers! Funds from plastic, glass, and aluminum containers go toward the rebuilding of the O'Brien Memorial Library in Blue River, McKenzie River Clinic, and the Vida McKenzie Community Center - all destroyed in the Holiday Farm fire.

December 31

Board of Commissioners

Lane County Board of Commissioners. Harris Hall, 125 E 8th Ave, Eugene. The Board of Commissioner meetings begin 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.

January 1

Board of Commissioners

Lane County Board of Commissioners. Harris Hall, 125 E 8th Ave, Eugene. The Board of Commissioner meetings begin 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.

January 3

Yoga In Leaburg

Yoga in Leaburg meets from 8 to 9 a.m. at McKenzie Fire & Rescue's Training Center, 42870 McKenzie Hwy, every Friday.

January 4

A Dime At A Time

The Bottle Boys are busy from 10 a.m. to noon at the Leaburg Store, 42840 McKenzie Hwy. for Saturday morning sorting sessions. Donations can be dropped off at the Leaburg Store and maybe help us bag up the containers! Funds from plastic, glass, and aluminum containers go toward the rebuilding of the O'Brien Memorial Library in Blue River, McKenzie River Clinic, and the Vida McKenzie Community Center - all destroyed in the Holiday Farm fire.

January 4

BINGO

BINGO at the Vida McKenzie Community Center, 90377 Thomson Lane in Vida at the Center is a family (kids welcome) fun night - Doors open at 6:30 p.m. This is not the high dollar payout as some locations are. We use a computer bingo game which is displayed on a large TV screen. Everyone is welcome

The snack bar has a variety of goodies for one's taste - Hot dogs, nachos, popcorn, desserts, an assortment of drinks, no alcoholic beverages.

Right now we are playing 15 games (Per crowd request)

2 cards for \$5, buy as many as you can handle (Can buy extra cards at any time) We take about a 20/30 minute break after game 10. The last game pays out \$75 if there is a bingo within 54 cards or less then it drops down to \$50.

January 7

Board of Commissioners

Lane County Board of Commissioners. Harris Hall, 125 E 8th Ave, Eugene. The Board of Commissioner meetings begin 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.

January 7

Family Story Time

From 10 to 11 a.m. at the Camp 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.

January 7

EWEB Board

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. An interpreter can be provided with 48 hours' notice prior to the meeting. To arrange for this service, call 541-685-7000. Each person will have up to three minutes to speak, though the Board President may adjust speaking time as needed.

January 8

Board of Commissioners

Lane County Board of Commissioners. Harris Hall, 125 E 8th Ave, Eugene. The Board of Commissioner meetings begin 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.

January 7

Walterville Grange

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

January 8

Board of Commissioners

Lane County Board of Commissioners. Harris Hall, 125 E 8th Ave, Eugene. The Board of Commissioner meetings begin 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.

January 9

Board of Commissioners

Lane County Board of Commissioners. Harris Hall, 125 E 8th Ave, Eugene. The Board of Commissioner meetings begin 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.

January 8

Watershed Wednesday

Join McKenzie River Trust every Wednesday morning 31799-31601 Green Island Rd, Eugene, from 9 - 11:30 a.m. to help care for this special area where the McKenzie and Willamette Rivers meet. Projects vary based on the season but typically include invasive species removal, habitat care, or planting/tree establishment.

January 9

Watershed Council

The McKenzie Watershed Council meets from 5 to 6:30 p.m. at various location, please contact Melanie Giangreco, McKenzie Watershed Council Operations Assistant (458-201-8150) melanie@mckenziewc.org

January 9

VMCC

The Vida McKenzie Community Center Board meets from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. at 90377 Thomson Lane in Vida.

January 10

Yoga In Leaburg

Yoga in Leaburg meets from 8 to 9 a.m. at McKenzie Fire & Rescue's Training Center, 42870 McKenzie Hwy, every Friday.

January 10

Art Walk

The Second Friday Art Walk meets from 4 to 7:30 p.m. at the Emerald Art Center, 500 Main St, in Springfield.

January 11

A Dime At A Time

The Bottle Boys are busy from 10 a.m. to noon at the Leaburg Store, 42840 McKenzie Hwy. for Saturday morning sorting sessions. Donations can be dropped off at the Leaburg Store and maybe help us bag up the containers! Funds from plastic, glass, and aluminum containers go toward the rebuilding of the O'Brien Memorial Library in Blue River, McKenzie River Clinic, and the Vida McKenzie Community Center - all destroyed in the Holiday Farm fire.

January 11

Living River

Join the McKenzie River Trust and take a walk near the place the Willamette and the McKenzie Rivers meet, near 31799 Green Island Rd. in Eugene. Observe 15 years of tree-planting work on Green Island, a habitat for beaver, river otter, and over 150 species of birds. If you're looking for a special place to connect to nature this year, join in the fun on the second Saturday's, March through December, and explore the Living Rivers in your backyard.

<h2>An Invitation to Worship</h2>	<p>Living Water Family Fellowship Pastor - Doug Fairington 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)</p>
<p>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</p>	<p>Catholic Church St. Benedict Lodge Chapel 1/2 mile off Hwy. 126 on North Bank Rd., McKenzie Bridge Sat. Eve. 5:00pm Sun. Morn. 9:30am; web page: sbldodge.opwest.org</p>
<p>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</p>	

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Direct Answers

By Wayne & Tamara Mitchell

Regrets



I've been married 15 years and have a wonderful husband and two children. About a year and a half before I married I was seeing a man I wanted to fall in love with me. The first time I slept with him he said, "I'm set in my ways, and I like my freedom."

I kept hoping he didn't mean what he said, but eight months later our shallow relationship ended. After my marriage I would bump into him periodically--it's a small community--and he said, "Out of all the girls I've been with, and there's been a lot, you're the only one I think I could have had a future with."

Whenever he talks to my mother, he asks how I am. When I see him, he always says what stupid things he's done with his life. He never married. In November I saw him

at a party and we talked. I could tell he is pining. It's almost painful to watch.

Now I can't stop thinking of him. As a catharsis, I decided to write him a letter. The letter talks about our relationship, my feelings now, and says I will always think of him though I need to get on with my life. Should I give him the letter?

Jan, when you dated this man, what was the reality? He was not going to give you a wedding or children.

In hindsight people have regrets, but regrets are not love and he didn't have the requisite love for you. Life passed him by, and young women are no longer parading through his bedroom. He fantasizes if he had you, his life would be different.

That's the key to a disastrous life--focusing on a past event and wishing it had been otherwise. He's like the man in the casino who feeds a slot machine for three hours and walks away, only to learn the next person won a huge jackpot on "his" machine. Years later he's still imagining what he would have done with the money.

Burn the letter. He wants you to rescue his past, and that's not

something you can do.

No Laughing Matter

I am thinking of divorce. My husband has become increasingly mean, unappreciative, and ugly. He lashes out over the smallest things and blames me for everything. We both work full-time and take night classes. We are under stress, but I am sick of using that as an excuse.

Several weeks ago we went to dinner with another couple. As we left the house my husband carried a box to the car, and I held the door open for him. One of our dogs squeezed past and ran into the yard.

We were trying to get him back in the house when my husband stepped in dog poop. He didn't notice it until we arrived at the restaurant. It was a small area smashed into the tip of his shoe. He went to the bathroom to wash it off and came back to the table so angry.

He told me if I hadn't let the dog out, he wouldn't have stepped in it. It was my fault. He embarrassed me in front of the other couple and people at nearby tables. He was so mean everyone felt uncomfortable the rest of the evening.

This type of thing happens almost every day. I don't know how much more I can take. I've made compromises and every effort to change my ways to please him, but nothing works.

Michelle

Michelle, Steve Martin did a comedy routine about two swinging Czech guys in stripped shirts and checkered pants. In their "native land" a breakup is accomplished by saying, "I break with thee, I break with thee, I break with thee. I throw dog poopie on your shoes."

Now

By Robert Browning

Out of your whole life give but a moment!

All of your life that has gone before,

All to come after it, —so you ignore,

So you make perfect the present, —condense,

In a rapture of rage, for perfection's endowment,

Thought and feeling and soul and sense —

Merged in a moment which gives me at last

You around me for once, you beneath me, above me —

Me—sure that despite of time future, time past, —

This tick of our life-time's one moment you love me!

How long such suspension may linger? Ah, Sweet —

The moment eternal—just that and no more —

When ecstasy's utmost we clutch at the core,

While cheeks burn, arms open, eyes shut and lips meet!

Copyright Credit: "Now!" by Robert Browning from *Asolando: fancies and facts*. London: Smith, Elder & co., 1890. Public domain.

Source: *Asolando: fancies and facts* (Smith, Elder & co., 1890)

Although the early part of Robert Browning's creative life was spent in comparative obscurity, he has come to be regarded as one of the most important English poets of the Victorian period. His dramatic monologues and the psycho-historical epic *The Ring and the*

You've already done the dog poop. Now say the words.

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.

*Book (1868-1869), a novel in verse, have established him as a major figure in the history of English poetry. His claim to attention as a children's writer is more modest, resting as it does almost entirely on one poem, "The Pied Piper of Hamelin," included almost as an afterthought in *Bells and Pomegranates. No. III.*—Dramatic Lyrics (1842) and evidently never highly regarded by its creator. His approach to dramatic monologue influenced countless poets for almost a century.*

Browning was born on May 7, 1812 in Camberwell, a middle-class suburb of London. He was the only son of Robert Browning, a clerk in the Bank of England, and a devoutly religious German-Scotch mother, Sarah Anna Wiedemann Browning.

Along with other Victorians, Browning was dismissed by influential figures among the modernists, including T.S. Eliot (although Ezra Pound paid tribute to Browning as one of his literary fathers). Following World War II, however, Browning's reputation has been salvaged by a more objective generation of critics who note his poetic failings but also trace his influence on the poetic forms and concerns of his 20th-century successors. Through all the vicissitudes of critical reputation, however, Browning's major contribution to the canon of children's literature, "The Pied Piper of Hamelin," has retained its popular audience.

At the time of his death in 1889, he was one of the most popular poets in England.

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Help Wanted

The Vida McKenzie Community Center will begin its Tuesday Senior Center in November and seeks a Part-time Paid Program Director. Call Gerry Aster 541-896-3001.

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 Waltherville Loop, a block from the Waltherville 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

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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- reader
 48. Swellings
 50. Chancy
 52. Between E and NE
 53. Stomach reflex
 55. *Fish eggs
 57. *Second C in CDC
 61. *_____d'hotel
 64. Not mainstream, as in art
 65. "To His _____ Mistress"
 67. Bracelet add-on
 69. Covers with gold
 70. Stiff grass bristle
 71. Irving of Dallas Mavericks
 72. Eyelid affliction
 73. Fairytale princess test
 74. Winter driving hazard

- DOWN**
 1. Curved one
 2. Table extender
 3. Sicilian erupter
 4. Movie trailer, e.g.
 5. Perfecting, as in skill
 6. Toe the line
 7. Popular pickup
 8. Puppy love
 9. Jumping stick
 10. Forsaken
 11. Barely got by
 12. Spumante-producing town
 15. Greek god's libation
 20. Rumpelstiltskin's machine, pl.
 22. *Freshwater staple in sushi restaurant
 24. Idolize
 25. *Chef's hat
 26. Modified "will"
 27. Offer two cents
 29. Drawn tight
 31. Baby porcupines
 32. Commonplace
 33. Like Cheerios
 34. *Blue-_____ special
 36. Unsubscriber's focus
 38. *_____ de partie, or line cook
 42. _____ structure or _____ red
 45. Cujo's disease
 49. Ray shooter
 51. Foxhunter's call to hounds
 54. Short version
 56. C2H5
 57. Marlboros or Camels, slangily
 58. Army group
 59. Lazily
 60. *Complimentary dish
 61. Asian starling
 62. *Steak choice
 63. Great Lake
 66. Be in the red
 68. Were introduced

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AT THE RESTAURANT

ACROSS

1. Bet's predecessor
 6. Ogre-like creature
 9. Attorney's bargain
 13. Old but in
 14. *Restaurant waiting area?
 15. Located near crannies?
 16. List of Catholic saints
 17. Down Under runner
 18. White heron
 19. *_____ meal, or staff meal
 21. *Meat and fish, in Italian restaurant

23. Singer/songwriter Yoko
 24. *What appetizers do to appetite
 25. *Deuce
 28. Like a reliable move
 30. Not a desktop
 35. "My bad!"
 37. Painter Chagall
 39. Beyond suburban
 40. Wisecrack
 41. *Nigiri, e.g.
 43. *Middle Eastern bread
 44. Of an arm bone
 46. That time
 47. Let it stand, to proof

Solution on Page 9

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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.

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

Click here or go to:
tinyurl.com/yeye92hx

Events from Dec 19th

COMMUNITY FOOD PANTRY

The Dec 19th 3:00pm - 6:30pm
Leaburg Food Pantry
 All are welcome! Please send food!

McKENZIE RIVER CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The Dec 19th 3:30pm - 4:30pm
McKenzie River Chamber of Commerce Board Meeting
 The McKenzie River Chamber of Commerce is a business organization of volunteers that provides members with key opportunities for ...

McKENZIE VALLEY NEIGHBORS RADIO GROUP

The Dec 19th 6:00pm - 5:30pm
McKenzie Valley Neighbors Radio Group
 GMRS net tonight (Thursday) "See" you on the regular! (Transmit on 46.7, 47.5, 48.0, 48.2, 47.5, P, tone 100 on the uplink). Make it easy! ...

Leaburg GMRS Radio Preparedness

Every Thursday McKenzie Valley Neighbors GMRS Radio Preparedness Group Network Check-ins Thursday @ 8:30 p.m. McKenzie Valley Wide Net

KIDS EAT FREE

Men Dec 19th
Kids eat free!
 Every Monday (with adult meal purchase). Takeout, dine-in, outdoor seating (541) 726-9088.

McKENZIE VALLEY YOUNG LIFE CHRISTMAS PARTY

McKenzie Valley's YoungLife is celebrating Christmas this year on Saturday, December 21st. Youth and their parents are invited to join us. ...

McKENZIE VALLEY YOUNG LIFE CHRISTMAS PARTY

YoungLife • Christmas • Party • McKenzie

McKENZIE RIVER FOOD PANTRY

The Dec 19th 11:00am - 1:00pm
McKenzie River Food Pantry
 Free groceries are provided in accordance with Oregon Food Bank and Food For Lane County guidelines for food distribution to those in need. ...

BINGO!

Wed Dec 19th 5:00pm - 9:00pm
Wacky Wednesdays Bingo
 Cards go on sale at 6 pm. Bingo starts at 7 pm. Call 541-726-9088 for reservations in the morning. Spots fill up quickly. Register and bring ...

McKENZIE VALLEY NEIGHBORS RADIO GROUP

The Dec 19th 5:00pm - 6:30pm
McKenzie Valley Neighbors Radio Group
 GMRS net tonight (Thursday) "See" you on the regular! (Transmit on 46.7, 47.5, 48.0, 48.2, 47.5, P, tone 100 on the uplink). Make it easy! ...

McKENZIE VALLEY NEIGHBORS RADIO GROUP

Wed Dec 19th 9:00am - 10:30am
Lane Electric Coop Board of Directors meeting
 Members of Lane Electric Cooperative can join monthly board meetings, which begin at 9 a.m. Each meeting begins with a member comment. ...

McKENZIE VALLEY NEIGHBORS RADIO GROUP

The Dec 19th 9:00am - 10:30am
Watershed Wednesday
 Join McKenzie River Trout every Wednesday morning from 9am-11:30am at Green Island to help care for this special area where the McKenzie ...

McKENZIE VALLEY NEIGHBORS RADIO GROUP

The Dec 19th 9:00am - 10:30am
Lane County Board of Commissioners
 The Board of Commissioner meetings begin at 9:00 a.m. in Harris Hall, unless otherwise noted on the published agenda. Regular Board ...

McKENZIE VALLEY NEIGHBORS RADIO GROUP

The Dec 19th 9:00am - 10:30am
Lane County Board of Commissioners
 The Board of Commissioner meetings begin at 9:00 a.m. in Harris Hall, unless otherwise noted on the published agenda. Regular Board ...

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Emergency? Call 911

Problem Solved



By Christopher Elliott

Sears canceled the work order for my cooktop stove. Where's my refund?

After Sears cancels a work order for Gary Miertschin's cooktop stove, it promises him a refund. But the money never shows up in his account. What can he do?

A valve on my gas cooktop, which I bought through Sears, recently broke. A technician from Sears Home Repair showed up a few days later, diagnosed the problem, and placed an order for the parts.

Sears required me to pay upfront for the parts and the subsequent repair once the parts showed up. The total came to \$827.

Sears ordered four valves. Two showed up but the other two were backordered. The backordered parts never arrived, and Sears unilaterally canceled the work order. I only found out about this when I called to follow up.

A representative told me at that time that I would receive a verification of the refund within seven business days and a full refund within 21 days after that. It never happened. I have called numerous times to ask about the refund. It is very difficult to talk to a live person and when I do they are only able to tell me that the refund is pending and I should hear something shortly. I'm hoping you will be able to help me get my refund

Gary Miertschin, Houston

Sears should have fixed your gas cooktop quickly. But if it couldn't do the repair, it had an obligation to refund you right away. The foot-dragging only made a bad situation worse.

I think Sears also had an

obligation to tell you if it could make the repair. There must be a way for Sears' suppliers to notify it when they no longer support a product. Why couldn't they tell Sears so that you could take your repair needs somewhere else? I have no idea.

But the real problem here is the refund. Sears, like most other large businesses, issues refunds to the original form of payment. If it goes back to your credit card, there may be a delay of as many as two billing cycles, which means two months of waiting.

I've found this lag time is a license to delay refunds, even those that are legally required. Companies simply blame the credit card company for the delay, even when it's clearly their fault.

It's impossible to know what was behind your delay. Was it your credit card or was it Sears? Either way, it doesn't matter. If Sears promises a full refund within 21 days, you should get it -- and by the time you contacted me, you had been waiting more than three months.

A brief, polite appeal to someone higher up at Sears might have helped. I list the names, numbers and email addresses of the Sears customer service managers on my consumer advocacy site, Elliott.org. A succinct email to one of them might have pushed things along.

I contacted Sears on your behalf. A few days later, you had a full refund. I guess they figured out how to solve that little problem of waiting two billing cycles.

Christopher Elliott is the founder of Elliott Advocacy (<https://elliottadvocacy.org>), a nonprofit organization that helps consumers solve their problems. Email him at chris@elliott.org or get help by contacting him at <https://elliottadvocacy.org/help/>
© 2024 Christopher Elliott

County reprimanded on public notices

In December of 2024, the nine-member Oregon Government Ethics Commission (OGEC) issued formal reprimands to the Lane County Board of Commissioners for inadequate public notice regarding executive sessions held in March of the same year. The reprimand, known as a Letter of Education, was issued without a financial penalty. The commission found that the board's method of providing notice for these sessions

did not meet the legal requirements set by Oregon's public meeting laws. Specifically, the board failed to provide adequate notice to the public by only announcing future executive sessions during regular meetings, which OGEC deemed insufficient.

The OBC's action was tied to a September complaint by the Lane County Garbage and Recycling Association (LCGRA) a group of garbage haulers who accused the

county commissioners of holding two illegal executive sessions.

The reprimand underscores OGEC's role in ensuring transparency and adherence to public meeting laws among Oregon's public officials.

After getting notice of the board's decision, Lane County revised its procedures to expand legal descriptions in the agendas of executive sessions.

A Moment in Oregon History
By Rick Steber
(www.ricksteber.com)

December 21 - The winter of 1926 a rancher from Upper Crooked River ran low on hay and decided to drive his herd to the railhead in Bend. Buckaroo Harold Baker related, "There were seven of us, counting the cook, trailing 2,150 head of two- and three-year-old steers. The morning we pulled out it turned cold and stormy, and that first night we had ten inches of wet snow dropped on us. Conditions were mighty miserable. Took seven days to complete the drive and as we were coming into the stockyard in Bend we had a steady stream of citizens coming out to take pictures. They all thought it was a pretty big deal. And when the story came out in the newspaper they called it the Last Great Cattle Drive in Oregon.

Ski Report

December 19, 2024

The Hoodoo Ski Resort report for Tuesday showed five inches of new snow fell overnight, bringing the snow depth to 57 inches. Temperatures were 37 at the base and 30 at the summit, with winds out of the WSW at 27 mph. More snow is predicted this week as the base continues to build. For more information call 541-822-3337.

Mt. Bachelor reported temperatures of 29 degrees at the base and 23 degrees at the summit on Tuesday, with winds averaging 35 mph. Eight inches of new snow fell overnight, bringing the snowpack to 76 inches. Bluebird conditions were continuing this week with calm winds and clear skies. 24 of 124 trails were open, along with 5 out of 12 lifts. For more information call 541-382-7888.

Thank you to the subscribers and advertisers that support River Reflections' mission to connect McKenzie area residents with local news, activities, accomplishments, and history

SUDOKU SOLUTION

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CROSSWORD SOLUTION

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Water & Sanitation District appoints interim superintendent



Jim Parks and Melanie Stanley at the December 11th Blue River Water & Sanitation District Board meeting.

BLUE RIVER: The special Blue River Water & Sanitation District meeting on December 11th focused on several critical administrative matters. Jim Parks (interim chairman), Melanie Stanley (secretary-treasurer), and Terry Hernon attended as board members. The board approved the termination letter for interim superintendent Tony Cassa, who was notified of the meeting but did not attend. Jim Parks was appointed as the temporary superintendent. A request for the return of district property within seven days was approved.

Other discussions involved outstanding invoices with TAG (The Automation Group) and other vendors, noting discrepancies in payment records and the need for better documentation. Melanie Stanley presented payment history

and highlighted the need to clarify items in grouped payments.

The meeting also covered the need for new locks across the district due to security concerns and the past distribution of multiple keys.

The board scheduled a work session for December 17th from 6 to 8 p.m. to address financial reconciliation and other pending matters. A town hall meeting will be held on February 5th. Plans for additional Saturday meetings, to ensure better community participation, will include details on the new water system.

During public comments, Val Rapp from McKenzie Valley Wellness clarified the Three Sisters Meadow Partnership's status as an advisory committee without authority over the property.

Did you know...

Community newspaper readers share papers with up to 5 other people?



2017 NRA Community Newspaper Readership Survey

Explore a treasure trove of McKenzie River history - in the back issues of this newspaper. Go to: tinyurl.com/2rkpxsen

Trust in local media strong, despite loss of Oregon newspapers

By Isobel Charle Oregon News Service Oregon is losing local media outlets quickly, echoing a national trend.

This year alone, 130 newspapers nationwide shut down, according to a new report from Northwestern University.

Bob Singer, president of the Oregon Association of Broadcasters, said readership is low for local papers, which leads to a loss of advertising revenue. He pointed out local radio stations in Oregon have stepped in to fill in the gaps left by print media, and those stations are doing OK.

"It's not the robust industry it was a decade or so ago because things have changed," Singer acknowledged. "But I think that they're doing a very good job, especially the family-owned radio stations around the state."

Amid an increasing climate of misinformation and media distrust among some Americans, recent data show the news outlets they



Newspapers continue to disappear at a rate of more than two per week.

say they trust the most are all local: newspapers, radio stations and television stations.

Robert Asen, professor of rhetoric, politics and culture at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, said in this polarized climate, where people choose to get their news matters.

"It seems less and less that we're willing, or able, to see things that we may share in common," Asen observed. "That's exacerbated by a media ecosystem

where we're not even getting the same information - where we're not even sharing the same basic set of facts."

In the survey, 74% of Americans believe not having a local newspaper would seriously affect their community. Yet more than half of all counties in the U.S. have just one local news outlet or none at all. In Oregon, nine rural counties have just one local news outlet, while five rural counties have none at all.

Although the outlook for local papers is grim, Singer is hopeful about local radio holding on. He noted AM radio especially serves a vital role in disaster preparedness and communication for when electricity and cell towers are not working.

"Where are people going for their information? They go to their car and they turn the radio on," Singer concluded.

newservice.org

Memorial site

Continued From Page 1

the UO School of Architecture and Environment members wrote, adding, "Its high visibility would be a morale boost for residents and help energize the community."

The study includes three alternative levels of development, depending on the level of funding available. Starting at the entry-level, they suggest a shrine could be created with community participation, utilizing on-site materials recycled into seating. "Some form of community organization would be required to build momentum for the site's development as a memorial," they suggest.

The area could be replanted at

the mid-level to accommodate a small trail loop. A marker on the highway would encourage visitors to pull off to view signage or local artworks denoting narrative points along the trail.

Including everything mentioned in the mid-level cost option, the site could be further developed as a rest-stop area with bathrooms, offering more motivation for travelers through the region to stop and enjoy the site. "This would require adoption by a local organization for maintenance of facilities," the report notes.

The proposal is currently in its initial planning stages. Still to be determined are how the

proposals might mesh with the McKenzie River Ranger District's management plans, who will own and operate the facility, and where development funds could come from. Other considerations include ways of protecting structures like the chimney and limiting public safety concerns.

The proposal will be on the agenda for the McKenzie Chamber's board of directors meeting scheduled for December 19th via Zoom at tinyurl.com/yc395jyh. People with input on the project can send comments to info@mckenziechamber.com

[Return To Page 1](#)

Guest Opinion

Continued From Page 2

ing public health or safety.

Decisions to permit or failure to prevent or remove immediately abominations such as live or recorded beatings, sexual assaults or salacious posts of thrill killings might be made subject to civil lawsuits over "intentional infliction of emotional distress" by family members or even the public at large.

Still, even such relatively limited changes seem at odds with the core principle that private companies, like individuals, have First

Amendment rights.

Social media and new technologies provide us with unprecedented ways to connect with others, to make our individual opinions known even when those views are controversial or even offensive to some, and to participate in the self-governance essential to our democratic republic.

Sweeping aside broad protections for Big Tech in the name of

fairness or transparency may seem like a good way to correct some social media "wrongs," but not if it ushers in an era of new limitations or lost opportunities for our individual rights.

Gene Policinski is a senior fellow for the First Amendment at the Freedom Forum of Arlington, Virginia. He can be reached at gpolicinski@freedomforum.org.

[Return To Page 2](#)

McKenzie Eagles Sports Report



By Cliff Richardson

Continued From Page 2

going any better than their male counterparts last week. McKenzie invited the Sutherlin JV team to the Upper McKenzie Valley and the visitors, "thank you very much",

left smilin' with a 47-17 win under their belts. That game was played on Tuesday, December 10.

Thursday, the Eagle gals jumped on the team bus headed over to Lowell and got their "hats handed to them" by the host Red Devils, a 9-61 point shellacking.

With the latest loss, the Eagles are 1-4 on the new season and looking to add a couple to win column this week as they face Chiloquin, Glendale and Yoncalla on Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday, respectively.

[Return To Page 2](#)

Know before you go. Visit TripCheck.com.

Emergency? Call 911

\$\$ REWARD \$\$

Stolen – 6:03 a.m. Saturday, December 7th from Goodpasture Rd.

John Deere 2023 model XUV590M

10 hours

SN: 1M059MACPM062763

Engine SN: 2G06AANK 00518

Desc: Dark green w/black trim. Has a cab roof and a small boot carrier.

Brand new: Purchased in October 2024

The home was just being finished after the fires. Persons knew where the “gator” was, drove it out, and then loaded it onto a trailer.

A reward is being offered for information leading to the return of the stolen property. Call 714-914-7949.



Restoring oak and prairie habitat in Willamette Valley



CameraCraft/AdobeStock

Oak and prairie habitats are prioritized in the Oregon Conservation Strategy.

By Isobel Charle Oregon News Service
The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and its partners have received a \$4.5 million grant from the federal America the Beautiful Challenge program to restore more than 2,000 acres of oak and prairie land up and down the Willamette Valley. The project will draw on partnerships across 22 public, private and tribal sites to restore native plant species such as camas, and reduce fuel for wildfires.

Lindsay McClary, restoration ecologist with the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, said these oak and prairie lands have deep cultural significance as a source of food, medicine and hunting grounds.

“Really, these landscapes were maintained by traditional tribal practices and they were relied upon as such. So restoring these habitats is really like restoring cultural life ways to the Willamette Valley,” she explained.

Once widespread, only 7% of oak habitat and 1% of prairie habitat remain in the state. This is in part due to the impacts of fire suppression, so one piece of the restoration plan is prescribed burning.

McClary said Kalapuya fire

practices shaped the Willamette Valley, and that removal of fire has invited in too much plant growth, making the area more susceptible to wildfires, and added that oak and prairie habitats require constant disturbance, and the role of fire in ecosystems is often misunderstood.

“I think this project is really going to help shift and change that social conversation where we can embrace fire as an important tool when it’s done correctly,” she continued. “And it’s going to lead to a reduction of those catastrophic wildfires that nobody wants to live through and experience.”

Oak trees are known to support biodiversity like few other trees are able to. From large wildlife who graze on the acorns down to the many species of fungus that grow with them, oak trees are known to support at least 2,300 species. McClary said slowing down and observing the trees, will help people more fully appreciate them.

“From top to bottom, there’s a whole little city of creatures that are existing or relying on a single oak that we really just don’t notice,” she said.

newsservice.org

Wildland firefighter pay raises could vanish without action by Congress

By Jacob Fischler Oregon Capital Chronicle
The \$20,000 salary increase for wildland firefighters in the 2021 infrastructure law could be coming to an end next week if Congress doesn’t act.

The infrastructure law included \$600 million to boost salaries for the nearly 11,200 wildland firefighters for two years, giving the Interior Department or Forest Service employees a raise of either \$20,000 each or 50% of their base salary.

Federal wildland firefighters earn as little as \$15 per hour, with entry level positions earning just less than \$27,000 per year, according to Grassroots Wildland Firefighters, an advocacy group. Those rates are well below those of some state employees in similar roles.

The problem is Congress provided the higher pay rate would expire with the rest of government spending, which is set for Dec. 20.

Lawmakers are likely to once again pass a continuing resolution prior to that deadline to keep the government open at current spending levels into the new year.

But because the firefighter pay boost was part of the infrastructure law instead of a yearly spending bill, it would require additional legislation to keep being paid out beyond Dec. 20.

Firefighters, their advocates and some members of Congress are now pushing to have the pay raise made permanent, as lawmakers enter the final days of this session of Congress.

Disaster bill

President Joe Biden asked for a disaster relief spending bill after hurricanes Helene and Milton to include \$24 billion for the U.S.



USFS

Federal wildland firefighters earn as little as \$15 per hour, with entry level positions earning just less than \$27,000 per year, according to Grassroots Wildland Firefighters, an advocacy group

Department of Agriculture. Biden called for the bill — which is expected to be attached to the continuing resolution — to include “statutory language to support permanent, comprehensive pay reform for Federal wildland firefighters.”

The disaster aid bill appears the best chance of addressing the issue this year.

And appropriators are looking at fixing the issue in their annual funding bills, even as work on those bills is likely to be paused as Congress instead looks to pass a stopgap measure past Dec. 20 to keep the government funded for the next few months.

A House proposal included in Republicans’ spending bill covering the Interior Department, the Environmental Protection Agency and other agencies would direct \$330 million for a pay increase to replace the expiring infrastructure law salary increase. It would be a permanent pay fix.

Setting a baseline in an annual spending bill would help keep the

salaries consistent and avoid the uncertainty that comes with the expiration of the one-time infrastructure law funding, supporters say.

“Rather than continuing temporary and uncertain Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) supplemental payments, the funding in this bill will permanently address Federal wildland firefighter pay and capacity,” the funding bill’s chief sponsor, Idaho Republican Mike Simpson, and Oregon Republican Lori Chavez-DeRemer wrote in an August op-ed in the Idaho Statesman.

Simpson is the chair of the subcommittee responsible for writing the bill. Chavez-DeRemer, who represents a purple district in Central Oregon, lost her reelection bid this fall but won a nomination to join President-elect Donald Trump’s Cabinet as secretary of Labor.

The Musk-Ramaswamy cost-cutting drive

The effort comes amid an atmo- [Firefighter pay - Page 14](#)

RECOGNITION

**20
25**

It's time to vote for the Reader's Choice for the McKenzie River's Man, Woman & Business of the Year

Cast your vote by **December 23rd**
 Fax, write, or email their name and an explanation of why you think they're the best in the McKenzie Valley

**59059 Old McKenzie Hwy.
 McKenzie Bridge, OR 97413
 rivref2@gmail.com**

Every Kid Outdoors provides opportunity for 4th graders & families to find holiday trees

Calling all fourth graders! This year's Every Kid Outdoors program is underway, and the U.S. Forest Service wants to make sure all eligible fourth graders (and their parents and educators) know that it's not too late to request their free Every Kid Outdoors public lands pass, or to get a complimentary permit to cut their own Christmas tree on a National Forest this holiday season.

The Every Kid Outdoors program provides fourth-grade students and accompanying family members free entry to federally-managed public lands, water sites, recreation areas and historical sites across the United States. Students are encouraged to sign up early in the school year. Passes can be issued beginning Sept. 1 the year they enter fourth grade and are valid through August 31 the following year.

In addition to free access to thousands of sites managed by federal agencies across the nation, Every Kid Outdoors pass holders are also eligible for a free permit to cut their own Christmas tree on a National Forest.

Research shows children ages nine to 11 are beginning to learn about the world around them.

The Every Kid Outdoors Program provides no-cost access to millions of acres of federally managed lands and water recreation sites for fourth graders and their families, encouraging them to explore, make long-lasting memories in nature, and inspiring them to help care for and protect our public lands.



Passes can be used at any federally-managed location that other national recreation passes, such as the America the Beautiful pass, can be used.

This includes federally-managed National Forests, National Parks and Historical Monuments, and other public lands and water recreation areas managed by the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Department of the Interior's National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Reclamation, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

The complimentary pass covers parking or admission fees for the passholder, accompanying

siblings, and up to three adults - ensuring the entire family can join them in exploring natural areas, learning about our history and culture, and understanding the importance of environmental stewardship.

Please note that sites managed by concessionaires or special uses permittees may have additional fees that are not covered by the pass.

Signing up for an Every Kid Outdoors pass is easy!

If you're a fourth-grade student, ask an adult for help. Then visit the Every Kid Outdoors website and follow the instructions to register.

Educators can request passes for each of their fourth-grade students - visit the Every Kid Out-

doors educator's page to submit a request.

Once registered, download a paper Every Kid Outdoors pass voucher to print and show it to a ranger when you enter eligible sites. If there is no ranger, the voucher should be displayed on the dashboard of your vehicle in lieu of a parking permit. At some sites, you can also exchange the paper pass for a durable plastic pass.

Our online visitor map can help passholders and their families find activities and locations to visit.

To access the free Christmas Tree cutting permit, visit Recreation.gov and look for National Forests offering Christmas Tree permits for sale.

Enter the number from your

Every Kid Outdoors plastic pass or paper voucher when making the purchase, and the cost of the permit will be waived at checkout (a \$2.50 reservation fee will still apply).

Students can also use their Every Kid Outdoors passes to claim their free Christmas Tree permit at participating National Forest visitor centers or Ranger Stations, but vouchers cannot be used to claim a free pass from partnering retail locations.

Christmas Tree cutting permits are also available to the general public for purchase. The cost is \$5 per permit. Permits can be purchased on Recreation.gov or from participating Forest Service offices and retail partners.

Children of all ages can also download, color, and decorate our Christmas tree ornament coloring page for a fun, handmade addition to their tree!

When planning your tree-cutting adventure, it's important to carefully read the overview and need-to-know information prior to purchasing the permit.

Make sure you know where you're authorized to cut, and what to look for - and look out for - when visiting the forest.

Review the "Ten Essentials" for winter recreation and outdoor activities.

Mud, snow and ice are seasonal hazards across the northwest - but they may arrive earlier or become more severe at higher elevations, and weather conditions may change quickly.

When traveling by vehicle, research your planned route as well as alternate routes, and ensure your vehicle and its passengers are well-prepared to face poor conditions or delays.

Is a trip really necessary?



Find yourself on the go all the time? The next time you think about going "to town" to shop, think about the time involved, fog, the traffic, construction zones, street confusion, and stress. Give yourself a break - and more time to enjoy life's simple pleasures.

Dollars spent in town stay there but when you Shop at Home, your dollars improve your local community. You not only improve your own well being but those of others by supporting local businesses. Next time



McKenzie River Reflections



mckenzie river reflections newspaper.com

Shop at Home, it makes \$ense

Wildfire resiliency

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In Spring 2024, Oregon's U.S. Senators Jeff Merkley and Ron Wyden secured major investments to strengthen forest health and wildfire resiliency, protect public lands and the environment, secure important programs for Tribes, and support critical projects for communities across the state. The funds came through the 2024 minibus funding package and totaled \$42 million. EWEB was one of 28 Oregon community-initiated projects awarded funding thanks to Senators Merkley and Wyden.

\$350,000 of the grant is earmarked for EWEB to monitor and manage hazard trees near power lines in high-risk areas. The utility also plans to work with Eugene Springfield Fire and ODF to identify priority areas for fuels reduction in the Eugene South Hills.

The Oregon Department of Forestry will use \$325,000 to assist with fuels reduction projects such as land clearing and fuel breaks

For McKenzie Fire & Rescue, Bucich says the District's next step is to advertise a bid process and hire a contractor. "Once the contractor is selected, we will compile a list of interested participants. Our goal is to start the project in March or April, continuing as long as funds and fire season conditions permit," he said.

McKenzie Fire & Rescue offers free property assessments focusing on reducing hazardous fuels

within 100' of the main structure, detached garages, etc., along with safe access (driveways). "What's amazing about these funds is that we will be able to provide this service free for qualified homeowners," Bucich added. "If you live in the Cedar Flat and Deerhorn areas, give us a call @ 541-896-3311, and we will set up a time to complete an assessment of your property."

"This funding will directly benefit over 150 private landowners and indirectly benefit surrounding landowners. Overall, the mitigation projects on electric infrastructure assets will support a resilient electric grid for all customers," according to EWEB Senior Project Manager Gina Dally.

In addition, the utility says it plans to manage over 300 miles of electrical lines within the EWEB service area by utilizing new technology for vegetation management practices near power lines. EWEB incorporated this new satellite-based forestry analytics software in 2024 to aid crews in identifying and removing hazardous vegetation growth along EWEB transmission and distribution lines.

"By partnering with local fire agency professionals to establish a successful fuels reduction project on a landscape level, we are effectively supporting the community in these higher risk locations," Dally said.

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\$2.6 million party

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again, he watched it on TV.

That summer, there was a huge event called the Oregon Centennial Exposition and International Trade Fair, held on the Columbia River just north of Portland. Fred and his family went several times; there was a lot to see and do there. A huge Exposition Building showcased hundreds of companies and state agencies: Alpenrose Dairy, Hyster (the forklift company), all the local radio and TV stations, Tektronix, Franz Bread ... the Atomic Energy Commission was there, talking about how nuclear power could take Oregon and the nation into a smog-free future. A huge statue of Paul Bunyan stood outside. There was a miniature train taking folks around to see all the exhibits — a Frontier Village, a Bavarian Beer Garden, a train of covered wagons, an Indian Village with totem poles and tepees, and actors all around in character.

The Exposition kicked off with Raymond Burr, a.k.a. Perry Mason, as master of ceremonies. Roy Rogers and Dale Evans were there; Harry Belafonte, Lawrence Welk, and Merle Travis were also on the program. Fred was there, on opening day. It was truly spectacular.

Looking back on it now, it gets Fred thinking about what he had, and what he lost, between 1959 and 1989 — thirty years, a blink of an eye really. The Oregon he grew up in was full of prosperity, as anybody willing to roll up their sleeves and go to work could bring home a decent income. He knew it hadn't been like that for everyone, but for most, it was a Pacific wonderland for real, with gorgeous unspoiled scenery and a sense of community and equality, and log trucks everywhere creaking under loads of old-growth trees.

He knows now that it had been



An example of a North Clackamas County Oregon Centennial token. This is the coin that would have been circulating in Molalla when "Fred" was a kid, during the runup to the Centennial.

doomed to end sooner or later. In his 30-year career he's noticed how much smaller the sticks have been getting at the mill, and in the log-truck loads he passes on the road.

He also knows Oregon can't go back. There were so many things Oregonians were blissfully ignorant of in 1959, besides the fact that eventually the trees would run out: pollution in the rivers, the shameful treatment of Indians by those golden pioneers he so admired, nuclear waste, urban sprawl, traffic congestion — and, of course, expanding bureaucracies in Salem telling everyone what to do.

Thirty years earlier there was a starry-eyed innocence to the Beaver State. And innocence, once lost, is gone forever. Oregon can't go back, Fred knows; the best he can do now is vote to stop the state and local governments from jacking up his taxes to compensate for their lost timber revenue. He guesses he might as well go ahead and do that. It's better than nothing, he figures. (Arguably, he's wrong — but the impacts of Measure 5 are a subject for another day.)

But still, Fred sure wishes the

good times could have lasted just a few more years, long enough to get him to retirement age.

"I can't give you what it's worth, a mint pre-'64 Winchester like this," says a voice behind him, startling him.

He looks up. The pawnbroker is holding his rifle.

"Two fifty is the best I can do," the broker says.

Fred sighs sadly. He's going to miss that rifle; he's used it to get venison for his family every season for the past twenty years. But, the mortgage has to be paid.

He points to the Centennial Token. "Throw that in, and you got yourself a deal."

(Sources: "Centennial Exposition of 1959," an article by David Kludas published March 23, 2022, on The Oregon Encyclopedia; Salem Public Library archives)

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eBay

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Firefighter pay

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sphere favorable to funding cuts in Washington. Republicans, who will soon have unified control of Washington as Trump returns to the Oval Office, have blamed the inflation of the past four years on high government spending.

Trump has tasked entrepreneurs Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy with looking at ways to reduce federal spending. The pair of wealthy Trump backers has estimated \$2 trillion could be trimmed from the \$6.75 trillion annual budget, though they have been vague about what exactly would be chopped.

The Musk-Ramaswamy organization, which has not been formally created but is dubbed the Department of Government Efficiency, or DOGE, is not expected to be an official government entity. A Trump spokeswoman did not return a message seeking comment about whether wildland firefighter pay would be a target for funding cuts.

Finding the political will to increase spending for any purpose in such an environment could be challenging, though increasing the pay of wildland firefighters — who work to manage the increasingly severe and costly fires that particularly ravage the rural areas known as the wildland-urban interface — has support from across the political spectrum in Congress, including leading GOP members.

The House funding bill authored by Simpson that included the pay raise passed the House nearly along party lines.

In a video message to constituents this month, Simpson sounded broadly supportive of Musk and Ramaswamy's mission, but indicated there were areas he would fight to avoid cuts. He did not explicitly mention firefighter pay.

"It will be an interesting de-

bate," Simpson said of the effort to identify funding cuts. "I don't mind having outside eyes look at how Congress does their job and how the money is spent. It could be spent more efficiently and more effectively, thus saving the taxpayer money."

He added he was "excited" to see recommendations from the pair.

"There will be some I suspect I disagree with and a lot of them I probably agree with," he said. "So that will be a debate for Congress."

Senate bill

The Senate, which generally requires a much more bipartisan approach than the House, has not passed the Simpson-authored bill that Democrats opposed because of its drastic cuts to the Interior Department and EPA.

But the Senate companion spending bill, sponsored by Oregon Democrat Jeff Merkley, who chairs the corresponding spending panel in the Senate, also includes a permanent raise for wildland firefighters, as well as funding for a firefighter health and wellness program and a fund for housing.

"This bill honors the courageous work our federal wildland firefighters do by establishing a permanent fix to prevent a devastating pay cut," Senate Appropriations Chair Patty Murray, a Washington Democrat, said in a statement after the committee passed the bill 28-1 in July.

Jacob Fischler covers federal policy and helps direct national coverage as deputy Washington bureau chief for States Newsroom. Based in Oregon, he focuses on Western issues. His coverage areas include climate, energy development, public lands and infrastructure.

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Housing crisis

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aware of the scope of investment and lending critical in supporting the housing solutions we desperately need in Oregon and how we need to address the current gap. As commission chair, I'm encouraged that our newly developed rules build a strong framework to serve our diverse communities better and increase equitable housing production across the state."

Former Director of the Oregon Fair Housing Council and Vice-Chair for the commission, Allan Lazo, served as commission liaison to the rulemaking effort and has been deeply engaged in this work throughout the development of the rules. "We know that every part of the state is in a housing crisis, and these rules are in front of us today. This is part of the solution this commission plays," Lazo said during the commission's deliberations. "These rules address

all three legs of the stool - production, affordability, and choice."

He went on to note that, "There are going to be pieces of this we don't agree with, that we won't get right, that we will need to come back to; but every benchmark we reach as a commission moves us leaps and bounds above our last step."

"Boosting housing supply demands that we activate bold, practical actions to support our local leaders in tackling one of the state's biggest challenges," said OHCS Director Andrea Bell. "As the Oregon Housing Needs Analysis details, Oregon can't move toward a more equitable economy or address the full complexity of the homelessness crisis unless we substantially increase our supply of homes."

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