

Hand in Hand Farm honored for work with autistic children

By Sarah Brown
Lebanon Local

Hand in Hand Farm, operated by Dave Berger and Athena Perry, was recognized in March by the World Alliance of Asian Women during the 69th Session of United Nations Commission on Status of Women.

Berger and Perry flew to New York to accept the Special Contribution Award for International Public Welfare and Charity for their work transforming Asian families with autistic children, and to speak at a forum hosted by the Beijing Guangming Charity Foundation.

Since 2021, the organization based in Lacombe has seen an increase in the number of Asian families attending their family camp and parenting classes who are coming from out of state. Perry explained that most of the parents are Chinese-American, but some families have come from as far away as China and Singapore to attend the farm's family skills training.

"It's for any parents, but

Public concerns about hospital's future spark online petition

By Scott Swanson
Lebanon Local

Samaritan Health Services late last week acknowledged that it is considering cutting various services in an effort to stem losses, despite the fact that Samaritan Lebanon Community Hospital has, individually, finished in the black for the past five years.



Marty Cahill

Respond-
ing to social media protests, which included posts on The Buzz in Lebanon, Samaritan CEO Marty Cahill on Thursday issued a statement that didn't deny the rumors, but stated that Samaritan officials are "broadly re-imagining the system and what serving our community might look like in the future."

See Hospital, Page 7



Dave Berger and Athena Perry (second and third from left) pose for a group photo after receiving a special award at the World Alliance of Asian Women.

Photo provided by Athena Perry

we're turning into kind of a magnet for families with autistic kids from Seattle and Bay Area," Perry said of the program.

Seattle-area teacher and writer Ling Jin is responsible for alerting the Asian Alliance about the contri-

butions Hand in Hand Farm was making.

She had been writing a blog about her experiences at the farm and her stories made their way to key leaders who nominated Berger and Perry for the award.

Following the conference,

Ling published an article for the World Alliance of Asian Women, sharing the details about the event and the structured methods Berger and Perry use to change the course of a family's life.

According to Ling, Berg-

See Hand in Hand, Page 16



Grease Lightning on Stage

Photo by Sarah Brown

Cast members of "Grease" close out their performance during the production's opening night at Lebanon High School. The school's Musical Theater Production class presented its spring production May 15-17. Directed by Director of Bands teacher Aaron Smith and Choir Director Emma Christensen, the production topped out with a full load of 62 students, forcing the class to have two sets of casts to perform acting, production, backstage and tech. This will be Smith's last production at LHS because he is set to retire this year. As such, he urged to get Grease on the playbill for his final production. Smith was asked to help some years ago with the theater production classes and now, he said, he's fallen in love with it so much that he's going to take some time off to take theater classes himself. Proceeds from the performances help support the cost of play licensing, costumes and set production. Find more photos online at lebanonlocalnews.com.

INSIDE



116TH ANNUAL STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL SECTION INSIDE



**LOCAL COUPLES'
LIVES TOGETHER GET
SCREEN TIME IN
TV SERIES**
PAGE 8



**FRIENDS WORK
TOGETHER TO
PRESERVE LOCAL
PIONEER CEMETERY**



OBITUARIES

Glenn Chilcote

July 1935 - April 20, 2025

Glenn Eugene Chilcote passed away April 20, 2025, at the age of 89 in his residence at The Springs at Lake Oswego, ending a full life as husband, father, friend and family member.



Glenn was born at home to Lorene and Paul Chilcote in Lebanon in July of 1935.

The oldest of three children, Glenn graduated from Lebanon High School, then the University of Oregon with a bachelor's of architecture, Class of 1960. He also served in the U.S. National Guard from 1958-1964.

He met and married Vivian Long in Portland and started a family in Lake Oswego. His architectural career began as a draftsman with several small firms in Salem and Portland, eventually opening his own office in 1979.

"Glenn E. Chilcote, AIA" was affixed to many small and large projects in Oregon, Washington and Montana.

In 1998, after 38 years as an architect, Glenn retired to an even busier life of volunteering, travel and church involvement. Medical Teams International, Clackamas County Money Management services, Lake Oswego Development Review Board, Structural Review Board for the City of Portland, Rotary International, Toastmasters, and the American Institute of Architects all benefited from Glenn's influence.

He was most proud of spearheading the partnership between Lake Grove Presbyterian Church and Northwest Housing Alternatives to construct Oakridge Park, a 45-unit affordable housing project for seniors in Lake Oswego.

Glenn also served in a number of offices with his church: Session Elder, Christian Education, Stewardship and Administration Commissions, Committee on Congregations for the Presbytery of the Cascades and Architect of Record for expanding the LGPC physical plant.

Glenn and Vivian traveled the world as well, touring gardens all over Europe, teaching English in China and exploring Israel to see biblical sites with Precepts Ministries. His favorite loca-

tion of all was our own Oregon Coast, where the family spent many happy hours.

Vivian predeceased Glenn the spring of 2016.

In the summer of 2018 Glenn and Monica Mincheff made things official with a ceremony at the same Portland church where he met Vivian all those years ago.

Glenn is survived by his two children, Brian Chilcote of West Chester, Pa., and Marie Chilcote Hibbs of Lake Oswego; grandchildren Nolan, Shannon and Meagan Chilcote of West Chester, Jordan Hibbs of Redwood City, Calif., Hanna Hibbs Eastman of Forth Worth, Texas; and great-grandchildren Brady and Ella Eastman.

The family is incredibly grateful for the kindness and compassion of Serenity Hospice care over the last year.

A memorial service will be held Saturday, May 24, 2025, at 2 p.m. at Lake Grove Presbyterian Church in Lake Oswego. In lieu of flowers, send donations to Lake Grove Presbyterian or Medical Teams International or a charity of your choice.

Dorothy Grove

Dec. 12, 1931 - May 12, 2025

Dorothy Jane Grove, 93, of Lebanon passed away May 12, 2025.

She was born on Dec. 12, 1931, in Cedarville, Calif., to Raymond and Marie (Harris) Atkinson.

Dorothy grew up in Cedarville and the Portland area, then moved to Sweet Home in the 1940s, where she attended Sweet Home High School. She married Harold Grove, her high school sweetheart, on Aug. 10, 1951.

In the 1960s and 70s she worked at both the Lebanon Middle School and Lebanon High School as a secretary and librarian.

Harold and Dorothy together founded East Linn Christian Academy in 1982, and when the school outgrew their accommodations, they donated the land for the current school campus.

Dorothy served at first as the bookkeeper, and then helped in various other

roles like the home economics teacher, which she taught in her own kitchen.

Dorothy enjoyed gardening and landscaping, growing fruit and flowers, as well as cooking and sharing many sweet treats for friends and family.

Dorothy is survived by her children: Dan and Judy Grove of Tillamook, Charlie and Susan Grove of Sweet Home, Al and Debbie Grove of Sweet Home, Ila Guerrero of Brownsville, and Bruce and Jen Grove of Salem; sister Barbara Calkins of Texas; and her brothers: John Atkinson of Roseburg, Phil Atkinson of Salem, and David Atkinson of Texas.

She was a proud grandma of 18 grandchildren, and 31 great-grandchildren.

Harold and Dorothy were also foster parents and sponsored exchange students: Soosan Loughmanpour, Kaveh Ofogh, Joyce Weeda, Vernor Munoz, Tina Marie and others. She was preceded in death by her husband Harold in 2021 and her parents Raymond and Marie Atkinson.

She will be greatly missed by her family and friends. We who knew and loved her are comforted by the knowledge that she has been welcomed Home by her Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

"She looks well to the ways of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her...a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised" - Proverbs 31:28,30b.

Viewing will be from 4 to 6 p.m. Friday, May 30, at Sweet Home Funeral Chapel, 1443 Long Street, Sweet Home.

A family graveside service will be at 10:30 a.m. Saturday, May 31, at Twin Oaks Memorial Park in Albany.

A memorial service will follow at 1 p.m. at Crowfoot Baptist Church, 699 Cascade Drive, Lebanon.

Memorial contributions can be made to East Linn Christian Academy or Crowfoot Baptist Church.

Sweet Home Funeral Chapel is handling the arrangements.

Marian Hutley

Sept. 13, 1928 - May 3, 2025

Marian Hutley (Glotzbach), of Lebanon, passed away May 3, 2025, surrounded by her husband of 77 years and children.

In her youth, she was in 4H and lived the farm life

in Paxico, Kan. She went on to have 11 children (one baby died at 1 day old), sewing clothes for them, quilts for each one, Christmas ornaments, embroidery, and crocheting.

She was a devoted Catholic; and a loving and compassionate mom and wife.

She is survived by her husband, Bob; ten children: Jerry, Maxine, Tom, Shirl, Mary, Deb, Joyce, Joan, Louise, and Laurie; a brother, Merle; 18 grandchildren, and 30 great-grandchildren.

Services are pending for a Mass at St. Edward's church in Lebanon.

Ruth Lenox

June 7, 1923 - April 19, 2025

Ruth M. (Schackmann) Lenox, 101, of Lebanon passed away April 19, 2025.

She was born June 7, 1923, on the family farm near McDowell Creek to Earl and Creszentia (Hainz) Schackmann.



She graduated from Lebanon High School in 1941 and was Queen of the Strawberry Fair that year. She remained a fan of the festival all her life.

She married classmate Wesley Lenox on June 14, 1953, in Lebanon. Her career was spent as a receptionist for Drs. Irvine and Herron, Drs. Haevernick and Wessels, and for a time at Mid-Valley Medical Group after she retired.

She was a lover of all animals, especially horses, and she and Wes had horses all their married life for the family to enjoy.

Her husband Wes; her daughter Karen Wilson; sisters Bertha Schackmann, Dorothy Simons Blatchford, and Agnes Lanning; and brother Charles Schackmann preceded her in death.

She is survived by daughter Karla Lenox; grandson Jeremy Wilson (Diane) and great-grandsons, Cole, Joe and Carter; granddaughter Sarah Teach (David) and great-granddaughter Sydney; her sister Betty Adams (Bob) and numerous nieces, nephews and devoted friends.

Viewing hours will be from 4 to 7 p.m. Monday, April 28, at Houston-Jost Funeral Home.

Funeral services will begin at 1 p.m. Tuesday, April 29, at Houston-Jost Funeral

Home. Burial will follow at Lebanon IOOF Cemetery.

Memorial contributions can be made to Samaritan Lebanon Community Hospital Foundation, Linn County Animal Rescue (LCAR) or the Lebanon Strawberry Festival for festival princess scholarships and directed to the funeral home at 86 W. Grant St., Lebanon, OR 97355.

Death Notices

Malachi David Easling, 21, of Lebanon, died April 8, 2025.

A celebration of his life will be held at a later date. Huston-Jost Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.

Patricia Ann "Pat" Gordon (Evers), 91, of Lebanon, died May 5, 2025.

Huston-Jost Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.

James "Jim" M. Howell, Jr., 82, of Lebanon, died April 10, 2025. Huston-Jost Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.

Lynn Carleton Howard, 94, of Lebanon, died April 11, 2025. Huston-Jost Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.

Lynn Dale Koehn, age 72, of Lebanon, died April 18, 2025. Huston-Jost Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.

Linda Louise McGuire, 80, of Lebanon, died April 14, 2025.

Private family burial will take place at Gilliland Cemetery. Sweet Home Funeral Chapel is handling the arrangements.

Roger Lang Mikkelsen, 94, of Lebanon, died May 4, 2025.

Huston-Jost Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.

Steven Dwain Nix, 74, of Lebanon, died April 19, 2025. Huston-Jost Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.

Sandra Lee Jensen Thome, 75, died April 30, 2025. Huston-Jost Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.

Julie Ann Verbeck, 67, of Lebanon, died April 25, 2025. Huston-Jost Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.

PUBLIC SAFETY

CIRCUIT COURT

Information for the Public Safety report and Courts in Lebanon Local is sourced from local law enforcement and fire agencies. Incident details, which may not always be available from agencies in time for publication in our weekly paper edition, are often updated online at sweethomenews.com as information becomes available. Addresses provided generally denote the location of the incident or arrest, occasionally indicating the origin of the call.

It is crucial to emphasize that our reporting of an individual's arrest or citation for a crime does not imply guilt. Determination of guilt can only be established through legal proceedings in court. We commit significant effort to following through as cases move through the judicial process.

Following is a list of abbreviations that may appear in our log reports: LCSO (Linn County Sheriff's Office); LPD (Lebanon Police Department), SHPD (Sweet Home Police Department); OSP (Oregon State Police); LMC (Lebanon Municipal Court); LCCC (Linn County Circuit Court); LCJC (Linn County Justice Court); SHMC (Sweet Home Municipal Court); AMC (Albany Municipal Court); LCS (Linn County Supervisory), OSPB (Oregon State Parole Board), FTA (failure to appear); FTC (failure to comply). A Roman numeral listed after a charge means that the charge is that numbered-degree: theft I (first-degree theft).

May 12

1:09 a.m. - Caller reported subjects trying to break into cars/setting off alarms near Sam's Place. Loyd Everett Paten, 58, said he was going

through dumpster. He was cited on AMC warrant for contempt of court.

6:43 a.m. - Caller reported subject enter Porta Potty and light a fire, 800 block Park St. Subject told officer he was just changing and lit a candle to stay warm.

7:45 a.m. - Officer assisted parent with getting child to car to go to school, 1800 block Stoltz Hill Rd.

8:00 a.m. - Caller reported subject rolling a smoke and smoking in Ralston Park. Eddie Zarr cited for trespassing II. Report taken.

9:53 a.m. - Makenna Lorayne Crofcheck, 26, cited for failure to carry proof of insurance and improper display, S 5th/W Oak Sts.

12:01 p.m. - Subject identified only as Aric trespassed from city parks for 30 days for smoking at Ralston Park.

12:35 p.m. - Caller reported baseballs and golf balls hitting and damaging her house from Bob Smith Park.

12:48 p.m. - Caller reported Knothole customer attempted to pass counterfeit \$100 bills. Report taken.

4:25 p.m. - Yolanda Ruiz Chavez, 43, cited for cell phone use while driving, 2600 block S Santiam Hwy.

7:14 p.m. - Officer responded to two-car crash, S Santiam Hwy./Market St. Dani Rena Pace, 39, cited for driving while suspended.

May 11

12:11 a.m. - Caller reported male peeing on Kuhn Theater building and noise complaint on street.

1:17 a.m. - Caller reported female kept ringing doorbell, jumping in front of window and walking away, 2300 block Kokanee Way. Report taken.

3:38 a.m. - Caller reported family member was really drunk, being verbally aggressive and yelling "when not warranted," 100 block E Elmore St. Asked for officer to help deescalate the situation.

9:17 a.m. - Caller reported child in front of house holding sword who appeared to be trying to hold back four adults also there, S Grove/E Oak Sts.

11:01 a.m. - Caller reported copper wire stripped from location, 300 block W Oak St.

12:15 p.m. - Dustin Phares, 42, of Lebanon, arrested on multiple warrants, resisting arrest, 1200 block Grant St. Report taken.

1:48 p.m. - Katherine Eva Stark, 51, cited for driving while suspended, W A/S 6th Sts.

1:59 p.m. - Caller reported theft of trailer and tools, 400 block W A St.

3:11 p.m. - Illegal dumping reported on Weyerhaeuser property on Snow Peak main line between E. Lcomb and Meridian drives. Large trash pile reported by Weyerhaeuser. The pile included a couch, mattress, folding bed/couch, and lots of clothing/ household items. Items appeared to be relatively old, dating from 2023 to 2011. Investigation ongoing. Report taken.

May 10

12:55 a.m. - Officer responded to welfare check about female in car, S 2nd/Cox Sts. She was counseled regarding fentanyl and driving.

4:10 a.m. - Kayce Grover, 23, of Lebanon, cited for speeding, 83/55, 5100 block Santiam Hwy.

4:50 a.m. - Christopher Jayne, 36, of Albany, cited for

See Public Safety, Page 11

Warrants are out on the following individuals: Omar Edgar Arroyo, Elias Nicolas Azar, Jonathan Edward Betar, Teresa Elaine Buchanan, Christina Marie Cash, Cynthea Rose Christiansen, Austin Shane Conner, Steven Michael Cooley, Nicholas Orval Duncan Jr, Donald Kay Flanigan Jr, Selina Renee Ford-Blackburn, Steven Edward Grimm, Aaron Thomas Halvorson, Robert Edwin Hoskinson, Bruce Clifton Kelly, Alan Kenneth Kilmer, Caden Jason Scotty King, Brent Jay Klient, Adam Christien Knoll, Andrew Donald LeGore, Mikel Vincent Lizama, Christopher James Lloyd, Heather Dawn Meeks, Mainor Misael Lucas-Velasquez, John Andrew Mance, Patrick Lee McNees, Allen Jess Russell, Rosemary O. Saviour, Donald Shane Simmons, Brandi Lynn Trelstad, Russell Dale Truedson, Rosemary Natasi Turnwall, Jack Rudolph Visconti, Donald Ray Watkins, Darnell T. Wells, Jessica Ashley Wynne.

Charges against **Misael Alvarez-Ramirez**, 28, of sexual abuse II and sexual abuse III were dismissed May 6.

Shane Paul Archibek, 56, sentenced May 2 to life suspension of a driver's license, 20 days jail, 48 months bench probation and \$2,255 in fines and fees after pleading guilty to DUII (meth, THC and liquor) with a .02% BAC.

Brent Lynn Bachman, 51, sentenced May 1 to 36 mos. suspension of a hunting license, 40 days jail, 36 mos. supervised probation and \$300 in fines after pleading no contest to felon in possession of a firearm, unlawful chasing/harassing/disturbing wildlife and FTA. Other

charges of FTA and felon in possession of a firearm were dismissed.

Colten Lester Bateson, 38, ordered April 18 to pay restitution after pleading no contest to assault IV and menacing. A charge of unlawful use of a weapon was dismissed.

Neva Victoria Blake, 59, sentenced April 24 to 21 mos. with the Oregon Dept. of Corrections, 36 mos. post-prison supervision after pleading no contest to attempt to commit a Class B felony - robbery II, attempt to commit a Class A felony - assault II, and unlawful use of a weapon. An additional UUW charge and three counts of menacing were dismissed.

Roy Jean Bohm, 42, charged May 15 with burglary I, unlawful use of a weapon and felon in possession of firearm. Bail set at \$30,000.

Dianna Kathleen Boullester, 61, sentenced May 5 to 45 days jail, 24 mos. bench probation and a \$100 fine after pleading guilty to assault IV.

A charge against **Benjamin Blair Brown Jr.**, 70, of FTA I was dismissed with prejudice May 12.

Kyle Lee Brown, 39, sentenced May 9 to 40 mos. with the Oregon Dept. of Corrections and two years post-prison supervision after pleading no contest to three counts of domestic violence - strangulation. Charges of assault IV, menacing and attempt to commit Class A felony were dismissed.

Cynthea Rose Christiansen, 18, charged April 15 with DUII (liquor).

A charge against **Shelly**

See Circuit Court, Page 7



DIAL-A-BUS

CURB TO CURB IN SWEET HOME

MON-FRI 7 AM - 4 PM

CALL TO SCHEDULE

OFFICE HOURS 8-4



SWEET HOME SHOPPER

MON-SAT 9 AM - 4 PM

SHOP LOCAL- 4 TRIPS A DAY

THROUGH TOWN

LINN SHUTTLE

MON-FRI 6 AM - 10 PM - 10 ROUTES PER DAY

SAT 7 AM - 7:30 PM - 6 ROUTES PER DAY

CALL FOR APPROVED FLAG STOPS

SWEET HOME:

FOSTER

SH CITY HALL

HOY'S HARDWARE

13TH & KALMIA

SHEA POINT

LEBANON:

WALMART

LBCC

PARK & OAK

ALBANY:

LBCC MAIN CAMPUS

TRAIN STATION

HERITAGE MALL

DOWNTOWN

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Crossword KEY

Puzzle on page 4

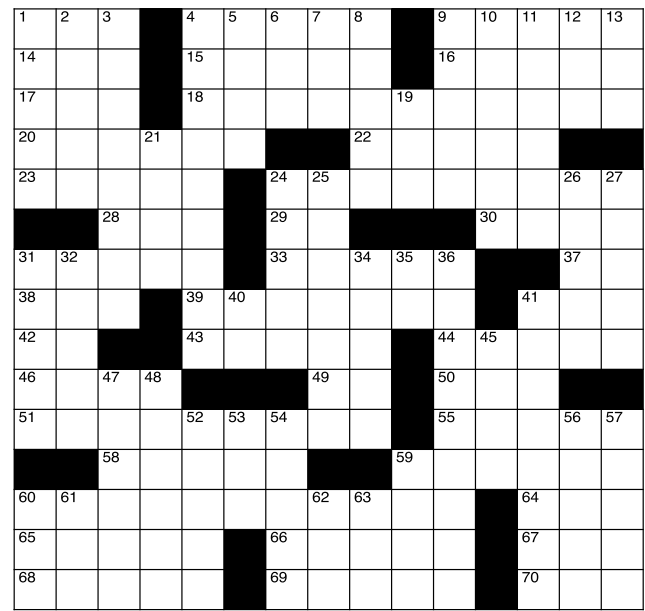
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SUDOKU KEY

Puzzle on page 4

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | 9 | 2 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 1 | 8 |
| 3 | 5 | 1 | 6 | 2 | 8 | 4 | 7 | 9 |
| 4 | 8 | 6 | 1 | 7 | 9 | 2 | 5 | 3 |
| 5 | 7 | 4 | 9 | 3 | 6 | 1 | 8 | 2 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 8 | 5 | 7 | 9 | 6 |
| 8 | 6 | 9 | 7 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | 4 | 8 | 2 | 5 | 7 | 9 | 3 | 1 |
| 2 | 3 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 1 | 5 | 6 | 4 |
| 9 | 1 | 5 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 8 | 2 | 7 |

CROSSWORD



CLUES ACROSS

1. Corpuscle count (abbr.)

4. Longtime sports columnist Cook

9. Tributary of the Rio Grande

14. Geological time

15. About ilium

16. Religion

17. Beverage holder

18. Its largest city is Fargo

20. Attaches muscle to a bone

22. Hindu queens

23. Sir __ Newton

24. Developments

28. British thermal unit

29. The Ocean State

30. Smell

31. Line

33. Seizure

37. Where vets are tended to

38. Goddess of the dawn

39. Pear-shaped fruit
41. Taxi

42. Where injured ballplayers end up

43. Preceding period

44. Uncovers

46. Smudge

49. Dad

50. Peyton's little bro

51. Flawless

55. Judges

58. Expressed one's displeasure

59. Immature

60. PBS interviewer

64. Hat

65. Cover with wood

66. Acts dejectedly

67. Perform

68. Where people store their tools

69. Sulfuric and citric are two

70. Long-term memory

CLUES DOWN

1. Muscles that control eyeball movement

2. Hillsides

3. The dried leaves of the hemp plant

4. Used to see far away things

5. Inventor Musk

6. We all need it

7. __ King Cole

8. Earthy pigment

9. Stringed instrument

10. A language of the Inuit

11. Shuttered

12. Cereal plant

13. Senior officer

19. Sportscaster Patrick

21. What day it is

24. Petrels with saw-toothed bills

25. Bumps in the road

26. Stars

27. Riding horses
31. Swamp plant

32. Type of bear

34. Style of cuisine

35. Home of the Flyers

36. Serious-mindedness

40. Velvet Underground album

41. Highly important

45. Winged

47. Cultured

48. Fastened

52. __ Royce

53. Wreath

54. Excessive fluid accumulation in tissues

56. Synchronizes solar and lunar time

57. Ninth month

59. Deployed

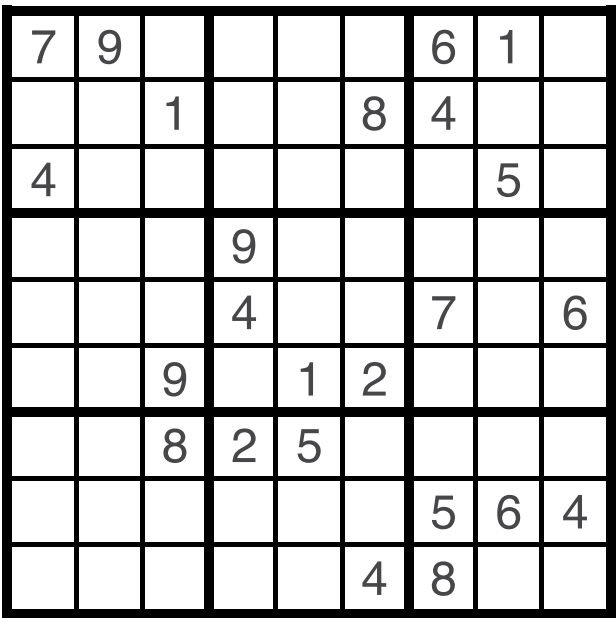
60. Cycles per second

61. Expresses surprise

62. Mythological bird

63. Open payment initiative

SUDOKU



Level: Advanced

Editorial: Veteran journalists offer needed coverage of big issues

By Scott Swanson
Publisher

I've been working in journalism in Oregon for nearly 20 years now and during that time I've been sickened by the decline of quality news coverage in the state.

It's a terrible situation, the result of many factors that I don't have space here to flesh out in-depth.

The Oregonian in Portland, the Register-Guard in Eugene, the Statesman-Journal in Salem, the Medford Mail Tribune, the Ashland Daily Tidings, the Bend Bulletin – all of them leading newspapers in their communities and in the state, are either mere shadows of what they used to be or no longer exist. Those that survive have depleted staffs and a resulting lack of news coverage, both regional and local. One of the biggest losses was coverage of legislative activities in Salem.

I could go on and on, but I won't here, except to say that it's not just large papers that have suffered. The struggles experienced by Lebanon Local and The New Era and the recent demise of the Brownsville Times illustrate this.

Suffice to say, local and state government are not getting the scrutiny they need. Citizens must have information about what's going on to be educated voters and be able to make sure problems are addressed in a timely and functional manner. That isn't happening at the level it did even 20 years ago, and the problem has gotten rapidly worse over that span.

Thankfully, I'm certainly not the only one who's noticed this. Others, including some of the most experienced and accomplished journalists in the state, have been distressed by this.

The good news is a response has been mounting.

In local communities, online news organizations have

appeared, supported by their communities, which have provided often high-quality news coverage of local affairs. Oregon still has news deserts, particularly in the southeast counties, but concerned citizens – including journalists – are stepping up to address the lack of watchdog journalism in various communities around the state.

On the statewide level, two efforts are particularly noteworthy.

One is the Oregon Capital Chronicle, which was founded in 2021 as a nonprofit news organization dedicated to “deep and useful reporting on Oregon state government, politics and policy.”

When the Capital Chronicle first appeared, I discussed with its founders the possibility of providing direct access to its stories from our website. That didn't materialize for various reasons, but we have occasionally run articles produced by its reporters and we have steered readers to the Chronicle website, oregoncapital-chronicle.com.

Although “media bias” websites may rate the Chronicle's opinion as swinging to the left, my personal experience is that most of its actual reporting is quite factual and not heavily biased, and most of those sites seem to agree. The Chronicle's offerings provide us with information about what's going on in Salem that is not consistently available anywhere else.

But let me move on.

The other significant response to the problem of lack of scrutiny, particularly in Salem, is the Oregon Journalism Project.

OJP is a response from some big players to the crisis facing journalism in Oregon. Here's how they state the problem that I touched on above: “Advertising dollars that once supported journalism have moved to Craigslist, Meta, and Google. Across the

country, this has driven local newspapers out of business or resulted in zombie newsrooms. Out-of-state ownership and business-model disruptions have left Oregon with media enterprises unwilling and unable to devote sufficient resources to quality, independent local journalism.” You can read more at www.oregonjournalism-project.org/the-problem.

These are veteran journalists who know their way around in state government, one of them Nigel Jaquiss, who won a Pulitzer Prize in 2005 for investigative reporting or exposing former Oregon Governor Neil Goldschmidt's sexual abuse of a 14-year-old girl while he was mayor of Portland.

The founder and director of OJP is Mark Zusman, who has been editor of Willamette Week for more than 40 years. During that period the newspaper has provided consistent scrutiny of Oregon politics and government, including its investigation into the business and political activities of then-Gov. John Kitzhaber's fiancée and First Lady Cylvia Hayes, which ultimately led to Kitzhaber's resignation.

OJP's goal is to provide “regular stories on matters of real interest to Oregonians, while shining a light on those institutions whose proper functioning is central to our quality of life. State and local government – along with the federal government's impact on Oregon – is our main beat.”

Faithful and scrutinizing features will notice a new header button on our website, lebanonlocalnews.com, titled “OJP.”

We have begun listing OJP stories there because these reports are things Oregonians need to read, things they should know – stories their local newspaper doesn't have the resources to cover effectively on our own. Not only that, their stated emphasis is to focus on news important to rural populations.

Here is just a brief sampling of some recent stories produced by OJP:

- Multiple reports on the looming state restrictions on diesel trucks, the most recent about the state DEQ's pause on enforcement of its controversial Advanced Clean Trucks Rule.

The New Era

LEBANON LOCAL

A LOCALLY OWNED NEWSPAPER

LEBANONLOCALNEWS.COM

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Commissioners OK request for rural Lebanon internet grant

By Alex Paul

Linn County Communications

Linn County Commissioners Will Tucker, Sherrie Sprenger and Roger Nyquist unanimously agreed Tuesday, April 15, to support a Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment Program grant that will deliver fiber-optic broadband Internet services to Lebanon-area residents by Consumers Power Inc./Peak Internet.

According to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, the Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment Program is a federal program that has earmarked \$42.5 billion to expand high-speed Internet access by funding planning, infrastructure deployment and adoption programs in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and five U.S. territories.

In a letter of support, the commissioners noted, "We are confident this initiative aligns with Oregon's mission to expand broadband access and bolster rural infrastructure."

The commissioners added

that the proposal will leverage "existing infrastructure to deliver high-speed fiber broadband that will address a critical need in our rural communities."

"This connectivity will enable remote work, online education, telehealth and economic opportunities — resources that are essential for our residents and businesses to thrive in today's digital world."

The commissioners said the project will also "strengthen the CPI electric grid by integrating fiber-optic technology to improve monitoring and outage response."

"By enhancing grid resilience, the project will also support wildfire mitigation efforts by enabling faster detection and response to potential electrical faults that could spark fires in our wildfire-prone region. In an area where weather challenges are growing energy demands test our infrastructure, this enhancement will ensure a more dependable power supply, benefitting our entire community."

Spend time at Healing Garden

Lebanon Community Hospital is hosting a series of monthly cultural events at the Boulder Falls Event Center and patio, 605 Mullins Dr. through the summer.

Japanese Tea Ceremony: Saturday, May 24, at 1 p.m. - Learn about the traditional Japanese tea ceremony emphasizing harmony, respect, purity and tranquility. Presented by Suwako Watanabe, Wakai Tea Association. Free.

Japanese Flower Arranging: Saturday, May 24, at 3 p.m. - Linda Nishioka will demonstrate ohara ikebana, the art of flower arranging. Free.

For more information or to register, visit samhealth.org/LebanonHealingGardens or contact Brandy O'Bannon at bobannon@samhealth.org.

Free home repair, upgrade workshops

Lebanon Area Habitat for Humanity will hold its final free Do-It-Yourself Workshop, "Adding Plank Flooring and Updates to Furnishings," from 5:30 to 7 p.m. on June 10 at the Habitat ReStore, 566 S. Main St.

The event also includes giveaways, and attendees get

30% off storewide afterward. Sign-ups required at tinyurl.com/HabitatDIYworkshops.

Class offered in flower design

Lebanon Garden Club will host its final flower design class, "Showing Water," from 12-2 p.m. on May 30 (register by May 24) at the Lebanon Senior Center, 80 Tangent St.

Learn from the pros, or consider bringing a 4-H group or other youth group.

Register in advance at the Lebanon Senior Center or by contacting Gaye Stewart at 503-510-4370 or rosere remembered@aol.com.

Learn about Indoor gardening

Master Gardeners will host free monthly lectures on indoor gardening at the Lebanon Senior Center, 80 Tangent St.

Lectures are: June 14 - to be determined; July 12 - seed starting for winter; Aug. 23 - tips for seed saving and identifying peak produce ripeness.

Bring your questions. For more information, contact Sheryl Casteen at casteen@aol.com.

Wellness Fair at Pioneer School

The Lebanon Community School District will host its annual Sources of Strength Wellness Fair from 4-7 p.m. on Wednesday, May 28, at Pioneer Elementary, 500 N 5th St.

Business adviser is Forum Lunch speaker

Lebanon Chamber of Commerce will host its monthly Forum Lunch from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Friday, May 30, in the Samaritan Lebanon Community Hospital conference rooms.

The speaker will be Gabriel Shields of Corvallis, who will speak on "Connection Strategies to Get New Customers and Grow Your Business." Shields is an entrepreneur, educator and storyteller based in Corvallis.

Cost is \$22 for members, \$25 for future members. To register, contact the Lebanon Chamber at (541) 258-7164 or visit www.lebanon.chamber.org.

For information on many more local events, see our listings under the "Community" button at lebanon-localnews.com.

EDITORIAL

From page 4

- Various reports about how state and local government policies are curtailing efforts to develop affordable housing and put buildings to new uses.

- Gov. Tina Kotek has made increasing Oregon's housing supply her single highest priority, yet the state has failed badly to hit her target of producing 36,000 new units per year. OJP takes a look at one flaw in the state's approach.

- Various reports on contributions the timber industry is making to the Oregon economy

Any of that sound interesting? They should. These are stories that we plan to post as often as possible for you to scrutinize.

Lebanonlocalnews.com readers have an OJP button

at the top of the page, but don't be alarmed if you notice that you're suddenly on sweethomenews.com. We set it up that way to make it easier to post stories quickly for Lebanon readers.

One more point to ponder: In my opinion, this is, by and large, pretty straightforward, nonpartisan news coverage telling us things we need to know about what is going on in our state, the type of things that haven't gotten anywhere near the coverage they deserve prior to these efforts.

These journalists are telling us what's happening, reporting the good and bad without a lot of spin either way. Oregonians need straightforward journalism, the kind that keeps government more honest and transparent.



Performers Are Spoonful of Sugar

Photo by Sarah Brown

Daniel Lopez and Eirys Brandt (as Michael and Jane Banks), Addyson Miller (as Mary Poppins) and Taelyn Poff (as Bert the chimney sweep) perform a scene together in Seven Oak's performance of Mary Poppins Jr. The Seven Oak Theatre Club presented its spring performance May 8-10. They used an updated projector and sound system to enhance the entertainment experience. As many as 50 students participated in the play, with choreography led by high schoolers Six Easton, Ether North and Mixxie Suitsev. According to Director Emily Latimer, proceeds from the plays help support the costs of play rights, costumes and set production. The club also attends professional plays, and any extra money in the budget helps upgrade equipment.

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City third-quarter finance report to council is mixed bag

By Sarah Brown
Lebanon Local

As the budget season for the next fiscal year is under-way and the City of Lebanon works through a tight economic outlook, Finance Director Brandon Neish provided a report on current third quarter finances during the City Council meeting on May 14.

So far this fiscal year, the city has brought in \$34,634,484 in new revenue and spent \$31,078,392.

Utility Service

Neish reported that the city had budgeted \$13.79 million for 2025, and the city so far has collected \$11.94 million in utility fees. Based on historical trends, the city estimates it will collect \$14.24 million.

His report notes that the increases are driven primarily by increased water consumption across utility accounts and an increase in bulk water purchasing, while sewer revenue has held relatively stable.

However, with increased water usage this year, he expects to see sewer revenue increase, as well.

Property Taxes

The city expects to receive approximately the amount budgeted for property tax revenue for this fiscal year. The city budgeted \$8,534,769, and estimates show projected revenue totaling \$8,579,986 – just \$45,000 (.53%) beyond budgeted figures.

Neish reported that while taxes are nearly balanced, the variances differ fund-by-fund.

In the General Fund, the city projects an extra \$140,000 in property tax revenue while tax revenue in the General Obligation Bond Fund is projected to fall \$94,000 short of the original budget.

This will result in an inter-fund loan to cover necessary debt service payments which will need to be repaid in the 2026 fiscal year.

Intergovernmental

Intergovernmental revenue – revenue from other government organizations such as the school district, fire dis-



Mayor Ken Jackola, left, and City Manager Ron Whitlatch discuss the bidding process for construction work in the city.

trict, county, state or federal government – is projected to fall short of the adopted budget by nearly 20%, excluding state grant funds for work at Cheadle Lake Park.

This is due to a “significant” deficit seen in state revenue sharing, which impacts the General Fund.

The city projected state liquor taxes would fall 40% this year, but instead they only fell 20%. Cigarette revenue continues to fall year-over-year.

Neish said that the state liquor tax will need to be monitored moving forward – as it once was a stable source of revenue for the city – because it is falling short of the budgeted amount by \$75,000 this year.

Liquor taxes peaked in 2023 at \$381,000 and are projected to be \$357,000 this year. The state’s projection shows \$317,000 for Lebanon next year, a decrease of more than 15% from 2023.

“As liquor sales decline – which is apparently a trend that I did not realize was occurring in the country – we will start to see a reduction in that revenue as well,” he told the council.

Franchise Fees

Franchise and contribution revenues this fiscal year are projected to slightly exceed

budgeted expectations, with total collections estimated at approximately \$3.34 million – about \$300,000 more than the \$3.03 million budgeted.

This is driven primarily by higher-than-expected receipts from Pacific Power and NW Natural, which together account for more than the overall increase, Neish reported. Rate increases across these two utilities are likely driving the significant increases.

A few categories, such as Comcast and Consumer Power, are projecting slightly lower returns than budgeted, but the shortfalls are more than offset by gains in other areas.

Interest

“Interest revenue is once again a high performer in outpacing the adopted budget,” Neish reported.

While interest rates have started to fall, the Federal Reserve has held off on rate increases recently, which is driving higher revenues, he reported.

The city projects \$2.85 million in interest earnings this year, more than 1.25 times the adopted budget. As the city continues to spend more money held in reserve for capital projects, this will begin to fall again alongside falling rates, which is widely expect-

ed. Staff expects this to occur after the current fiscal year.

Other Revenue

Other revenue city-wide is projected to increase 41.90% from the adopted budget, or \$1.21 million.

This includes increases in court fees (\$83,000) and motel tax revenue (\$88,000) based on year-to-date receipts, as well as the City Services Fee which is estimated to bring in \$1.03 million this year.

General Fund

Neish reported that revenue generation in the General Fund has increased since the last financial update in January.

Revenue estimates for 2025 increased nearly three-quarters of a million dollars, with increases seen in state revenue sharing and a rebound in franchise fee revenue.

“As a result, the five-year forecast shows a much better picture, though still shows a need for the newly-minted City Services Fee throughout all five years and an increase of approximately 1% annually to maintain about \$2 million in one-time, expendable fund balance,” he reported.

In other business:

- The council held a public

hearing for and approved exemption to competitive bidding for Cheadle Lake Park projects;

- The council held a public hearing for and approved annexation of street segments into the city;
- The council held a public hearing for and approved the amendment of fees and charges for city services;
- City Manager Ron Whitlatch announced the City Council meetings will move to the Lebanon Public Library starting next month;
- Whitlatch reported he and Public Works Director Jason Williams testified at the Capitol on the city’s capital request for the wastewater plant;
- Neish reported the city acquired 15 new vehicles through the Enterprise fleet contract, and sold 10 vehicles through the program for a profit of \$70,000;
- Whitlatch reported on a recent clean-up by Oregon Dept. of Transportation under the bridge on Park Street;
- The council heard a report from Library Director Kendra Antila on policy changes regarding amount of time staff will stay with a minor after closing, ADA guidelines for exclusion of “out of of control” service animals, smoking rules at Academy Square, prohibiting bathing/washing in restrooms, prohibiting bed rolls/bedding inside the library, and denying acceptance of “very long” overdue books.
- Councilor Michelle Steinhel announced she spoke with Marty Cahill, CEO for Samaritan Health Services, about rumors that Samaritan Lebanon Community Hospital might lose the Girard Birth Center. According to her, Cahill confirmed the closure is under consideration, but it’s not yet a done deal and there will be a community engagement and feedback process before a final decision is made.
- Councilor Dave Workman said he believes it’s time to start considering logical steps on how to reopen the jail. Councilors Dominic Conti and David McClain agreed. City Attorney Tre Kennedy said there are some ideas on the table, and Whitlatch said the options can be presented, but “bottom line, it comes down to money.”
- McClain expressed concern about “water gushing down the inside wall of City Hall” during a recent rain-storm and would like to discuss what to do about the unsafe conditions of that building.

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CIRCUIT COURT

From page 3

Lee Cox, 54, of unauthorized use of a vehicle was dismissed without prejudice April 4.

Antonio Cruz-Ruiz, 32, sentenced May 16 to five days compensatory service in lieu of jail, 36 mos. bench probation and a \$100 fine after pleading guilty to harassment. Charges of assault IV and strangulation dismissed.

Kayla Rose Day, 27, placed in the diversion program after pleading guilty to DUII (liquor) with a .13% BAC.

Gage Austin Ferrando, 20, charged April 16 with two counts of fleeing or attempting to elude, and reckless driving. Posted 10% of a \$5,000 bail.

James West Fortenberry, 40, charged May 12 with DUII (liquor), unlawful possession of cocaine, reckless driving and failure to perform duties of driver when property is damaged.

Jermey Ray Harris, 45, charged April 29 with identity theft, fraudulent use of a credit card, computer crime and unauthorized use of a vehicle. Bail set at \$10,000.

Kylor Hartman, 25, charged April 14 with identity theft.

Rosemarie Theresa Hill, 60, sentenced April 17 to 10 days jail, five years supervised probation after pleading no contest to aggravated theft I and two counts of theft I. Additional charges of aggravated theft I and computer crime were dismissed.

Sir Frank Lee James, 53, charged April 23 with two counts of assault III.

Anthony Ryan Johnson, 23, sentenced April 11 to three years suspension of a driver's license, 240 hours jail, 36 mos. bench probation and a \$1,500 fine after pleading no contest to DUII (liquor) with a .12% BAC.

Justin Brent Jones, 26, sentenced April 28 to 90 days suspension of a driver's license and 60 days jail after pleading guilty to fleeing or attempting to elude an officer. A theft III charge was dismissed and an unauthorized use of a vehicle charge was deferred while Jones completes the Linn County Drug Court Program.

Trevor Allen Knapp, 40, charged May 1 with strangulation and assault IV. Bail set at \$15,000.

Elisha David Malcomb, 28, sentenced May 8 to six days jail, 24 mos. supervised probation and \$1,000 in fines

after pleading guilty to sexual abuse III.

Hayden James Newberg, 28, sentenced May 14 to 24 mos. with the Oregon Dept. of Corrections and 36 mos. post-prison supervision after pleading no contest to criminally negligent homicide involving the death of a child.

Charges of theft I and burglary I against **Bethanee Renee Nicewaner**, 28, were dismissed without prejudice on April 29.

Kamara Robinson Olson, 29, charged April 24 with criminal mischief I.

Luis Ortiz-Reyes, 38, sentenced May 7 to 19 mos. with the Oregon Dept. of Corrections, 36 mos. post-prison supervision and a \$200 fine after pleading no contest to online sexual corruption of child I.

Autumn Brooke Pearson, 31, charged May 15 with unlawful possession of controlled substance (fentanyl) and unlawful possession of methamphetamine.

Peggy Sue Pitts, 37, charged May 8 with four counts of FTA felonies.

Katrina Marie Routledge, 51, charged May 15 with being a fugitive from justice related to a matter in Nevada.

Ashley Amber Schooley,

40, sentenced May 2 to one year suspension of a driver's license, 168 hours jail, 24 mos. bench probation and \$4,151.04 in fines, fees and restitution after pleading guilty to DUII (liquor) with a .23% BAC and recklessly endangering another person. A reckless driving charge was dismissed.

Shingy Robert Shineachi, 18, charged April 11 with unauthorized use of a vehicle.

Samantha Renee Stevens, 30, sentenced April 17 to one year revocation of a driver's license, five days jail, five days compensatory service in lieu of jail and 24 mos. supervised probation after pleading guilty to two counts of unauthorized use of a vehicle. Two counts of possession of a stolen vehicle were dismissed.

Robert Patrick Torstrom, 42, charged April 29 with DUII (liquor), two counts of assault IV, two counts of recklessly endangering another person, and criminal mischief II.

Paul Walter Ulm, 59, sentenced April 18 to lifelong suspension of a driver's license, 90 days jail, eight mos. with the Oregon Dept. of Corrections, 24 mos. post-prison supervision, and \$2,255 in

fines and fees after pleading no contest to DUII (liquor) with a .241% BAC and reckless driving. Charges of FTA and criminal driving while suspended or revoked charge was dismissed.

James Wyatt Underwood, 41, sentenced May 1 to 10 days compensatory service in lieu of jail, 36 mos. bench probation and \$200 in fines after pleading guilty to unlawful use of a weapon and resisting arrest. A charge of recklessly endangering another person.

Jaime Mauricio Villa-Uruchima, 39, charged April 11 with criminal mistreatment I.

Jack Rudolph Visconti, 23, charged April 15 with failure to report as a sex offender.

Troy Steven Williamson, 23, charged April 14 with assault II. In a separate case, he was sentenced April 21 to 90 days suspension of a driver's license, 480 hours jail, 18 mos. supervised probation and \$300 in fines after pleading guilty to fleeing or attempting to elude an officer and FTA. Charges of reckless driving, driving while suspended or revoked, and driving uninsured were dismissed.

HOSPITAL

From page 1

"Our goal is to ensure safe, sustainable delivery of quality health care to our 300,000-person community today and for decades to come," Cahill wrote.

"As we identify easy to work more collaboratively as a system, those efforts should lead to more sustainable outcomes.

"In early 2025, the following services were identified for initial evaluation in this process: general surgery, orthopedics, women and children's services, and urology.

"No final decisions have been made. We will evaluate these new approaches deliberately and carefully over the next few months.

"There will be time allocated within the process for additional discussion with our internal and external stakeholders such as staff, board members and the community prior to finalizing any operational changes."

Following a Samaritan board meeting last week, a petition appeared on Change.org, credited to Michael Stevenson, titled "Keep the Lebanon Birth Center Open."

An explainer written by Stefanie McDougal, whose Linked-In page identifies her as a registered nurse with Samaritan, stated that Lebanon's

birthing center was among the services being considered for cuts, as well as the hospital's emergency surgery team.

That could not be confirmed with official sources prior to Lebanon Local's deadline.

Cahill in April was named to succeed outgoing CEO Doug Boysen on May 19.

He was appointed chief operating officer of Samaritan Lebanon Community Hospital and assumed the role of its CEO in 2015 until becoming COO for Samaritan hospitals in late 2023.

Hospitals across the U.S. are struggling financially due to a wide variety of factors.

A major one is low and delayed reimbursement rates from insurance companies, particularly Medicare and Medicaid.

Hospitals also have to shoulder increased administrative requirements to manage insurance claims, and they face rising costs for labor,

drugs and other supplies.

A big factor is a shortage of workers, which force them to use contract labor and sometimes reduce services.

In addition to Samaritan Lebanon Community Hospital, Samaritan Health also operates the Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center in Corvallis, Samaritan Albany General Hospital, and two on the coast: Samaritan Pacific Community Hospital in Newport and Samaritan North Lincoln Hospital in Lincoln City.

According to figures reported to the Oregon Health Authority, Lebanon is the most profitable of the five, with a profitable operating margin (the profit it makes on a dollar of sales after accounting for the direct costs involved in earning the revenue) of \$24,414,294 in 2024. Lebanon's profit over the last three years has been relatively stable, and it is the only one of

the five Samaritan hospitals that has been profitable every year since 2020.

By contrast, Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center reported a \$25,123,524 loss in 2024 after finishing with a loss of more than \$31 million the year before.

Albany was roughly \$7.2 million in the red at the end of 2024; the last year Albany finished in the black was 2020.

North Lincoln has been in the black the last few years - finishing with \$334,547

and \$268,408 in 2023, and the Newport hospital has finished right behind Lebanon - \$14,829,238 in operating margin in 2024 and \$22,600,684 in 2023.

Lebanon has averaged roughly 20,500 emergency room visits over the past three years, not far behind Albany (roughly 21,000 per year) and about 25% less than Good Sam (averaging just under 25,400).

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Local polyamorous couples share family life on television

By Sarah Brown
Lebanon Local

A local polyamorous family has been making headlines and, more recently, sharing their lives on television as they navigate the family dynamics of two relational couples raising multiple children together.

The closed quad family – Alysia and Tyler Rodgers, and Taya and Sean Hartless, Lebanon residents – are featured this season on TLC (The Learning Channel), a Warner Bros. Discovery television network.

The show, “Polyfamily,” consists of six episodes – the last two of which are yet to be released on May 27 and June 3. It is not known yet if there will be a second season.

Within the family dynamic, Sean Hartless is married to Taya Hartless, and Alysia Rodgers is his girlfriend. Tyler Rodgers is married to Alysia, and Taya is his girlfriend. Together they are raising five children.

“(The show) is following our relationship dynamics and kind of how we navigate challenges in our relationship in terms of, like, our non-romantic relationships and those challenges, the challenges of parenting,” Taya said.

According to a New York Post article, the couples met online in 2019 and fell in love. After having conversations about how to build a family

together, they moved in together.

The Hartless and Rodgers couples have been together for nearly six years now, sharing a home, sharing beds, and sharing parenting responsibilities. The way it’s explained is the women have their own rooms and the men switch between rooms every night.

Before the union, the Rodgers’ had two children together. Since the union, the pairs have had three additional children. One aspect of “Polyfamily” explores the family’s choice to not learn who the children biologically relate to.

According to Alysia, the television crew filmed their family for about six months, starting in September 2023. While having cameras watching them was “definitely a new experience,” the former economic development director said she appreciated the opportunity to have parts of Linn County highlighted on the show as the couples visited different places.

“I really enjoyed being able to show off parts of our community – ‘cause that’s just always something that’s near and dear to my heart – and being able to highlight those things,” she said.

But the meat of the story is about learning how to define their own unconventional relationships and find acceptance in society.

The family began openly sharing their lifestyle on so-



Photo courtesy of Warner Bros

From left, Sean Hartless, Taya Hartless, Alysia Rodgers, Tyler Rodgers.

cial media three years ago and that, Taya said, is when the production company reached out to them with the opportunity to share their story on television.

“We plan on continuing to tell our story from our point of view on our social media and continue to share kind of our day to day, which has been really fun for us,” Taya said.

“We’ve found a really awesome community online, and a lot of those people are local to, at least, Oregon, which

has been really fun. We do get recognized out in the community, and that can be really special, especially when those people are sharing that we’ve helped them either come out or learn something new, or just create talking points amongst their family and friends.”

In the show’s trailer, Alysia explains, “We never set out to live our lives like this, but we realized we could love more than one person and make our own rules as to what we want our family to look like.”

Brenda Lowry, communications consultant at Warner Bros., said TLC likes to explore topics about different kinds of people.

In the case of the Rodgers-Hartless couples, “it’s really more of a conversation about polyamory and how this works for their life, and just showing people different types of families that they’re maybe not aware of or that viewers haven’t had a chance to experience or see yet,” Lowry said.

The Rodgers’-Hartless’ intention in doing the show and sharing their lives on social media was to show people that they’re just like everyone else, Alysia said.

“Just because we look different, or may appear different, doesn’t mean that it’s bad,” she said. “We are a family just like everyone else and because there’s more of us, that just means that there’s more love to go around.”

In their six years together, the couples have received a lot of love and acceptance from the community, but they’ve also experienced judgment and rejection, Alysia said.

“This was our way to be able to kind of show polyamory on a larger platform and to be able to bring more awareness to polyamory and show that just because it’s different doesn’t mean that it’s bad,” she said.

LFD budget reflects service reductions due to \$858,450 shortfall

The Lebanon Fire District Board of Directors approved a \$15.3 million budget for fiscal year 2025-2026 during its May 13 meeting.

In his budget message, Fire Chief Joseph Rodondi stated the LFD faces a structural budget deficit with a projected shortfall of \$858,450 for the next fiscal year. He noted that the 2016 Master Plan identified that expenses were growing slightly faster than revenue, and the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the trend.

LFD, as its own special district and unassociated with the City of Lebanon, relies on four primary revenue sources: property taxes, which are limited due to state measures; ambulance fees, which amount to an average of \$3 million collected of \$9 million billed due to Medicare and Medicaid write-offs; grants; and reserve funds carried over from the previous year.



Photo by Sarah Brown

The Lebanon Fire District Board of Directors passes its budget for the next fiscal year.

Facing a growing budget gap, service reductions and reorganization are expected, including reorganizing personnel and reduction of available ambulance units. The proposed budget allocates its monies as \$7.6 mil-

lion in salaries and benefits, \$3 million in debt and contingencies, \$2.3 million in materials and supplies, \$1.4 million in capital assets, and almost \$1 million in special payments (retiree expenses, leave reserves, etc.).

In other business:

- The board approved a resolution for line item transfers for the current fiscal year;

- The board heard a financial report. Chief Administrative Officer Desiree Barker reported LFD received an

unexpected \$17,000 grant for cyber security risk management, obtained by the City of Lebanon’s IT department.

- Rodondi shared that during the Oregon Fire Chiefs Association conference May 8, Connor Fitzgerald, Kyle Kemper, Londyn Randall and Michael Maynard received a unit citation from the Oregon State Fire Chief for their rescue efforts at an adult care home last year.

- Rodondi reported they are working toward a possible agreement with the City of Lebanon to be able to rent or purchase vehicles through the Enterprise fleet program.

- The board considered an opportunity to lease out space to South Santiam Watershed Council. After an executive session on the matter, the board determined they were not interested in being “landlords,” and the responsibilities that come with that.

Lebanon School Board celebrates wins, extends Supt.'s contract

By Chelly Boufferache
For Lebanon Local

The Lebanon School Board celebrated the Lebanon High School's Battle of the Books team and, after some contention, voted to extend Supt. Jennifer Meckley's contract at its monthly meeting May 8.

The board recognized the high school's Battle of the Books team, which clinched the 2025 Oregon state championship, marking Lebanon's second win in the competition's history.

Coach Deanna Chambers Varner, a 30-year district veteran, praised her team's dedication.

"This success demonstrates not only knowledge, but critical thinking, collaboration, and a willingness to explore new perspectives. How awesome is that?" Varner said, noting that only four Oregon districts have won twice.

She highlighted the team's "deep love of stories" and emphasized that "literature still matters."

Students Kaz Dunn, Lilly Henderson, Vixxen Vielbig and Gabe Mann each delivered speeches, with Mann's read in his absence.

The board then addressed Meckley's request for a contract extension. Meckley, citing a 12% graduation rate increase over two years and favorable evaluations, argued that stable leadership benefits the district.

Board Chair Tom Oliver supported the extension, calling it a routine process unrelated to upcoming elections.

Board Member Nichole Piland, referencing Meckley's review, said, "We strongly support an extension. This is not about politics."

Emails from the community and staff echoed this, with one email urging to "send her contract without question."

However, public comment revealed some dissent.

Rose Kaler expressed concerns about academic performance and urged prioritizing smaller class sizes and hiring teachers over administrative expansion.

"Our district already faces significant challenges," she said.

Denise Oster Hames questioned the timing, suggesting outgoing board members were influencing future decisions that would be better left to the incoming board.

"We're watching, and this grandmother expects better," Hames said, calling for accountability and higher educational standards.

Conversely, teacher Bonita Randklev, celebrating her 20th year as a teacher in the



Photo Chelly Boufferache

Winners of the Battle of the Books include, from left, Vixxen Vielbig, Gabe Mann (photographed in the picture frame), Lilly Henderson and Kaz Dunn, with Coach Deanna Chambers Varner.

district, praised Meckley, stating, "The teachers give Meckley their full support."

Board member Clyde Rood raised concerns about the current contract language, noting discrepancies in vacation payout terms and a termination clause that were to have been updated from the last contract. He suggested tabling the vote, questioning the contract's validity.

Oliver countered that the language aligned with Oregon law and standard superintendent contracts. A motion to approve the contract passed with Rood being the only no vote.

The board also heard from Staff Sgt. Jollimore of the Or-

egon National Guard, who introduced a credit recovery program for juniors and seniors.

The initiative allows students to earn up to eight credits through basic training, with juniors attending basic before their senior year and earning up to eight credits, while seniors attending basic training and Advanced Individual Training (AIT) would secure credits for graduation upon return from AIT.

Jollimore presented it as an "educational alternative" developed with the Oregon Department of Education and the Oregon National Guard and encouraged anyone interested in learning more to

speak to him after the board meeting concluded.

In department updates, district Operations Director William Lewis announced an approximate \$2.4 million grant for a seismic retrofit of Seven Oak Middle School's gym, including roof repairs.

Finance Director Steven Proski confirmed the 2024-25 budget remains on track.

The Land Lab, the district's location for agricultural education, was celebrated for hosting the FFA District Field day competition, with Lebanon students placing first in Districts in milk quality and crops. The team then went onto the state competition and placed third in milk qual-

ity, and eighth in crops statewide.

The Land Lab also hosted its annual plant sale featuring hanging baskets, a popular event held before Mother's Day.

Students in the High School's trades classes completed a house through their house building program, and the home is now listed for sale with showings underway. Construction on the next house is slated to begin with the new school year.

Meckley closed by thanking the board for their comments and Rood for his thoroughness. She highlighted the Kindergarten Kickoff, as registration runs through June 17.



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COMP-NW colleges graduate their largest classes ever

By Cindi Hamar
For Lebanon Local

Western University of Health Sciences in Lebanon celebrated its largest graduating class May 12 at a ceremony held outside Boulder Falls Inn on the Samaritan Health campus.

The College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific-Northwest (COMP-Northwest) celebrated 107 Doctors of Osteopathic (DO) Medicine and the College of Health Sciences-Northwest (CHS-Northwest) honored 48 Doctors of Physical Therapy (DPT).

"This was the 11th class of DO's to graduate and the second class of DPT's since the college opened," said Emily Campbell of COMP-NW.

Western University President Robin Farias-Eisner, who presided over the ceremony, encouraged the Class of 2025 to rely on the skills they've acquired during their education and approach every situation with a humanistic lens.

"You are entering a field that is rewarding and yet demanding. The knowledge and skills you have acquired will empower you to make a profound impact on the lives of your patients,"

Farias-Eisner said. "Remember, medicine is not just about treating illness. It is about caring for individuals, understanding their stories, and advocating for their well-being, with that critical humanistic touch that you are so blessed to have acquired."

During the ceremony, COMP and COMP-Northwest Dean Lisa Warren, DO '01, MBA, encouraged stu-



Photo by Cindi Hamar

A procession of the Class of 2025 for COMP-NW initiates the start of their graduation ceremony.

dents to remember their love of medicine.

"Let inspiration be the thread that you continue to weave throughout your career. Be inspired by your patients, inspire your colleagues with your passion, and above all, never lose the inspiration that brought you to medicine in the first place," Warren said.

Dean Jonathan Perry recognized the second graduating class of the Doctor of Physical Therapy program, acknowledging the lasting impact they've made on the college.

"This class has so much personality, and every one of you has shaped the way we run our programs and the way we relate to each other," Perry said. "Your cohort gave us new traditions, created space for future cohorts, and modeled leadership in a way that will continue to ripple through our halls long after

Commencement. Thank you all for helping to shape this institution."

The graduates included two Lebanon residents, Dr. Kayla Baker, who grew up in Lebanon, and Dr. Alan Goering, who has lived in Lebanon for 10-plus years.

Physical therapy graduate Edwin Parathara, selected to speak by his peers, stated: "This program not only helped us gain a better understanding of the value we bring to the world as a profession, but it has helped us shape our character in ways we couldn't have imagined. It gave us essential qualities like time management, critical thinking, patience, and discipline, especially when the outcome wasn't always in our favor."

Dr. Kye See, selected to represent the DO Class of 2025, said: "I was so fortunate to spend these four years in medical school, working

alongside this group of over 100 incredible people that I am now happy to call doctors."

See added that, "from Day 1, there was always a sense of acceptance, understanding, and community that seems almost impossible in such a large diverse group of people. Medical school isn't easy, obviously, and there have been countless challenges during the last four years."

"What I will remember most about my time here is that every time something came up, each time there was a challenge, we stood together."

For Dr. See, medical school was also where he met his wife, COMP-Northwest classmate and 2025 graduate Holley See, DO '25. The couple were married just two days before Commencement, making graduation weekend even more memorable with both to each other and to

their profession.

Both grew up in Oregon and have taken internships in Oklahoma, with hopes of returning to Oregon.

"We had 100% residency placement and 19% are in Oregon," said Jessica Reynolds, career development specialist with the university. Students' length of residency is dependent upon their specialty. A family medicine residency would last three years.

COMP-NW is a branch of Western University of Health Sciences, located in Pomona, Calif.

Specialties for the Class of 2025 at Western are: 25% internal medicine, 22% family medicine, 11% emergency medicine, 10% pediatrics and 9% psychiatry. Of this year's graduates in medicine, 29% plan on staying in the Pacific Northwest, while 64% plan to stay in the Western States.

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Friends help preserve pioneer monuments

By Sarah Brown
Lebanon Local

One might say the dead are coming back to life as Friends of Pioneer Cemetery and the City of Lebanon work together to restore the headstones of Lebanon's founding families.

The grassroots effort, coordinated by Esther Hillary, consists of about half a dozen volunteers – mostly members of the Daughters of the American Revolution – who spend the summer months cleaning and maintaining the historic cemetery.

Hillary spearheaded the project two years ago after seeing several complaints on social media about the deteriorating conditions at Pioneer Cemetery. She reached out to people online and invited her DAR group to participate.

"Our DAR chapter needed a historical preservation project, because that's one of the big three things that we do (historical preservation, education, patriotism)," she said.

While anyone is welcome to weed and clean the cemetery, the city only allows DAR volunteers to perform the specialized work of cleaning the monuments and headstones, Hillary said. Trained by historic preservationists, DAR members scrape off the moss and use a special spray to wash away the grime and brighten the stones back to their original glory.

In their first year, the group worked on weeding the prop-



Photos by Sarah Brown

Patrick Skelley places leaves, weeds and other debris into a bag during the first work day of the year at Pioneer Cemetery.

erty, which in some cases was a "monumental" task, so to speak. For example, the Kees monument, Hillary said, was waist high in weeds.

"When we were weeding, we found monuments we didn't even know was there," she added.

In their second year, preservationists came in and restored several broken monuments. Now entering their third year, volunteers are back to clean the city's historic headstones. Visitors can now see some of the hundreds-year old marble stones transformed from what once looked like rough pieces of raw rock back into their original white and polished forms.

Last year, the City of Lebanon was awarded a \$5,025 grant through the State of

Oregon Parks and Recreation Department Heritage Program to fund the cleaning and repair of nine headstones at Pioneer Cemetery.

Historic Preservation Northwest, operated out of Albany by preservation consultants Bernadette Niederer and David Pinyerd, was hired to do the work. DAR hosted the pair on May 8 for a special presentation about their work in Lebanon.

Featuring three of the nine headstones, Niederer and Pinyerd explained how they leveled crooked monuments and used special mortars to repair the broken pieces. Using preservation-safe cleaner – D2 Biological Solution – elaborate fonts used more than 100 years ago on headstones are being unearthed



From left, DAR member Esther Hillary presents an award to Bernadette Niederer and David Pinyerd for their work restoring nine of Lebanon's historic cemetery headstones.

from years of grime.

Ciarra Keene, the city's public works operations coordinator, said they were unable to obtain a grant this year, but will apply next year to restore more monuments.

Meanwhile, by the hands of the Friends of Pioneer Cemetery, Lebanon's plot of land holding a tangible piece of its history is transforming into something of a park, where residents can meander and enjoy the scenery.

That's something that Patrick Skelley – a new Friend of Pioneer Cemetery – likes to do with his wife on his birthday every year as something

of a memento mori.

"It's a reminder that everybody dies," he said. "So that's kind of our reminder once a year. I figured since I use this and it's a public space, I might as well clean it up."

One of DAR's newest members, Stephanie Leffler, also joined the cleaning effort this year. On her first day of work, she was found on hands and knees scraping moss off an old marker.

"I think it's a great thing," she said. "I love history, I love our community, and I think it's just really important to do that."

PUBLIC SAFETY

From page 3

speeding, 80/55, 35200 block Hwy. 34.

5:16 a.m. - Charles Silveira, 26, of Lebanon, cited for failure to obey traffic control device, 32700 block Denny School Rd.

9:16 a.m. - Nathan Barnes, 44, of Lebanon, cited for speeding, 42/25, 800 block Tangent St.

9:43 a.m. - Terri Barrett, 43, of Scio, cited for illegal window tinting for allegedly having entire front windshield tinted and front door glass tinted below legal limit. 800 block Tangent St.

10:35 a.m. - Aaleijah Taylor Thomas, 30, cited on LCCC warrant for FTA on original charges of false information and obstructing police, and LMC warrant for FTA on original charge of child neglect II.

11:02 a.m. - Subject identified only as Nester cited on AMC warrant for FTA on original charge of property damage.

2:03 p.m. - Subject identi-

fied only as Hampton cited for driving while suspended and driving uninsured. Also cited on a SHMC warrant for FTA on original charge of fraudulent use of a credit card, and LMC warrants for resisting arrest, interference, and FTAs on original charges of unlawful possession of methamphetamine and driving while suspended.

7:28 p.m. - Chelsea Elkin, 33, of Lebanon, arrested for DUII, reckless driving, two counts reckless endangerment, 33600 block Totem Pole Rd. According to LCSO, two other people were in the car, at least one of them a child. Report taken.

8:00 p.m. - Caller reported subject ran at caller's car with bat and swung at them, near Seven Oak Middle School.

8:31 p.m. - Joshua James Webb, 47, cited on LMC warrant for probation violation, AMC warrant for contempt of court, and LCS warrant for contempt of court.

11:28 p.m. - Caller reported car's front windshield and rear driver-side window broken out, 200 block Hobbs St.

11:56 p.m. - Dwight Truman Eslick III, 25, cited for no valid operator's license, 100 block Market St.

May 9

8:09 a.m. - Caller asked for advice on how to get child to go to school, 1800 block Stoltz Hill Rd.

11:45 a.m. - Alyssa Snow Naftaniel, 35, arrested on AMC warrant for FTA on original charge of conspiracy, and LCCC warrant for FTA on original charge of burglary and theft.

12:11 p.m. - Cindi Lynn Nunn, 53, cited for no valid ops and improper display of registration, 1700 block S Main St.

12:40 p.m. - Officer responded to two-car crash, 900 block Park St. Alexys Jasmyne Lingar, 26, cited for failure to obey traffic control device. Araya Piper Rayne Bruce, 25, cited for driving uninsured.

2:07 p.m. - Subject identified only as McClurg cited for driving while suspended and improper display of registration. Also cited on LMC warrant for FTA.

2:34 p.m. - Subject identified

only as Worley cited on LMC warrant for probation violation.

4:50 p.m. - Caller reported theft of items from Dollar Tree. Loss valued at \$30.

5:24 p.m. - Subject identified only as Tidurcio cited for no operator's license, Park/E Rose Sts.

5:40 p.m. - Kayla Rene Spence, 36, cited for driving while suspended and driving uninsured, 2100 block S Santiam Hwy.

7:05 p.m. - Jonathan Hugh Trisdale IV, 44, cited on LMC warrant for probation violation and LCS warrant for parole violation - robbery III.

7:38 p.m. - Caller reported visitor at hospital has goat with her. The subject believed she had permission to bring goat in due to hospital policy, which allows cats, dogs and miniature ponies as service therapy animals. Subject said since goats were not explicitly unauthorized, it was allowed. Nurse supervisor confirmed goats are not allowed.

7:47 p.m. - Bryan Bauer, 41, of Lebanon, cited for failure to

obey traffic control device, 900 block W. Airport Rd.

8:12 p.m. - Dillon Mathew Jones, 27, cited for driving while suspended and driving uninsured, 3100 block S Santiam Hwy.

9:02 p.m. - Benjamin Weed, 54, of Lebanon, arrested for reckless endangering, 36700 block Victory Dr. According to LCSO, Weed was "unsafely" shooting a rifle on his property, and a bullet traveled onto a neighboring property and broke a window. Report taken.

May 8

7:09 a.m. - Deputy conducted traffic patrol in Sodaville. Five traffic stops for exceeding speed limit of 25 mph made on Spring St., Cascade Dr., but no citations issued. Most cars leaving town towards Lebanon speeding up to 30-35, deputy reported.

8:13 a.m. - Caller reported suspicious female in 36600 block Edgemont Dr. Deputy located female. She was picking up free couch advertised on Facebook Marketplace.

See Public Safety, Page 13

Local Kidco centers re-open, but future remains uncertain

By Jennifer Moody
For Lebanon Local

Kidco Head Start's unexpectedly long spring break finally ended this month, with the release of federal funding allowing the doors to reopen at all 13 of its mid-valley centers.

However one of the centers - Riverside, in Albany - has reopened only for a partial schedule because of staffing issues. And parents, staff and Executive Director Stephany Koehne remain concerned about the overall future of the federally-funded nonprofit.

"We are financially good through December of 2025," Koehne said. "I say that because we don't know what Fiscal Year 2026 is going to look like."

The Trump administration appears to have changed its mind about eliminating funding entirely for Head Start, something an internal budget proposal had mentioned as a possibility last month. The 2026 budget proposal released May 2 no longer included that possibility.

However, layoffs at the Department of Health and Human Services have closed five regional Head Start offices, including the Seattle office, which serves Oregon. National officials say they remain worried about children and parents in their programs.

"While Head Start is grateful that it was not explicitly eliminated in this skinny budget proposal, we are concerned about the significant cuts that threaten access to health services, education, and support for hundreds of thousands of families," the National Head Start Association

posted in a May 2 statement on its website.

Koehne said she's concerned, too.

"We are working very hard right now making sure people know that if indeed they are in support of Head Start, that they contact their congress members and let them know that defunding Head Start will be quite impactful," she said.

Head Start is celebrating its 60th birthday this year. The school-readiness and comprehensive social services program includes Early Head Start, launched in 1996 to provide free services to expectant mothers and to children from birth to age 3. Overall, it serves more than 800,000 children nationwide and employs some 275,000 staffers.

Designed specifically for preschoolers from low-income families, Head Start includes academics, free medical and dental care, meals and parent education.

The Sweet Home School District's program was one of the nation's first 50 original grantees. In 1977, the program expanded to become "Kids & Company," or Kidco, and grew to include centers in Lebanon, Sweet Home, Albany, Corvallis, Harrisburg and Philomath.

Mid-valley parents had a taste of what a Head Start closure feels like when the 13 centers closed for spring break in late March and didn't reopen until May 14.

Kidco serves 366 children and families and employs about 130 people, Koehne said. It receives about \$4.8 million in federal funds, usually distributed in two parts.

The second part of the funding for Fiscal Year 2025, though allocated, was not released on its usual timeline, Koehne said. At the same time, Kidco had begun a new program-wide year-round schedule, and while Koehne had budgeted for a price increase of about 15%, costs spiked to about 35%.

Program policy councils agreed with Koehne on a plan to consolidate all the closures scheduled throughout the year into one long spring break. This was both to save money and to give the government time to release the remaining funding for the fiscal year.

With the help of U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden, D-OR, Koehne said, those funds have now come through the pipeline. In the meantime, however, Riverside suffered staffing losses because of the uncertainty.

And while the White House isn't currently talking about dismantling Head Start, conflicting executive orders are keeping Koehne on edge.

"We have a lot of executive orders that say we must not do anything involved with diversity, equity and inclusion; basically banning it," she said. "However, our performance standards passed by Congress says we have to provide it."

Head Start agencies risk losing their designations if, among other things, they don't provide "culturally competent services," ensure full accessibility and individual support for children with disabilities, prioritize children who are homeless, recruit diverse staff members and ensure communication with families who use more than

one language.

"So now we have these competing pressures on us," Koehne said. "If don't do this, we're violating a law."

The American Civil Liberties Union has joined parent groups nationwide in filing a lawsuit against the federal government, calling anti-DEI executive orders "unconstitutionally vague" and asking for protection for Head Start. But the outcome of that suit is far from certain.

"It is a complex situation, and there are lots of rumors out there because there's just so much happening," Koehne said.

One of the myths she'd like to bust is that Head Start is "just preschool," or "just child care," things she hears from time to time.

"We don't just provide preschool. We provide hearing screenings, health screenings, nutritional resources, connections to community resources, help with family goals, connections to GED programs - we're truly a comprehensive social services program," Koehne said.

Kidco in particular is also an economic powerhouse, she added.

"That \$4.8 million? Almost 100 percent goes back into the community," she said. "We use local vendors. We have local staffers who own property and shop here. That money is going into our community, and our community will feel a loss."

Pam Woytt, a home-based educator for Early Head Start in Albany, pointed out the social services Head Start provides extend far beyond the children in the programs.

That's been true for her personally, as well as the families she serves.

Two of Woytt's sons, who are now grown, were in Head Start programs in Lebanon. When the youngest enrolled, a family advocate asked Woytt - then a stay-at-home mom - whether she was interested in going on to college.

"I was raised in poverty, and college was never discussed," she said. "I grew up thinking only rich people went to college."

Woytt said she was interested and decided she, too, wanted to work with families. She started taking classes for herself while her children were in Head Start, got a two-year degree and began working for Kidco in 2003.

That decision was a lifesaver, she said, a few years later when she and her husband divorced.

"Kidco gave me a career. If not for Kidco, I don't know where I'd be," she said. "I would have been left with no job training or degree."

Woytt said she sees that same growth in the families she visits. She might see a parent achieve a degree or a family finally buy a home, but it's also a step forward when she sees a mom battling depression finally opening her curtains for the first time in months.

"We measure success by any step forward. Half a step is still a success," Woytt said.

And, she added, "The true success story is if in one or two generations, those families don't qualify for Head Start anymore."

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PUBLIC SAFETY

From page 11

She was warned for failure to maintain lane.

9:23 a.m. - Tyler Niemeier, 39, of Albany, cited for driving while suspended, 36200 block Oak St.

10:36 a.m. - Unidentified subject cited on LMC warrants.

2:17 p.m. - Caller alleged a female pulled her pants down and exposed herself in parking lot, 900 block S 10th St.

5:01 p.m. - Caller reported they had moved into new residence, located firearm on property, 39900 block McDowell Creek Dr. Firearm seized by LCSO.

5:01 p.m. - Subject identified only as Griffith cited on AMC warrant.

7:13 p.m. - Caller reported theft of items from Dollar Tree. Loss valued at \$10.

7:42 p.m. - Austin Todd, 21, cited for failure to use seatbelt, 1700 block S Main St.

8:07 p.m. - Unidentified subject cited for driving while suspended and LMC warrant.

8:22 p.m. - Austin Jones, 24, cited for failure to carry insurance, S 2nd/W Maple Sts.

10:12 p.m. - Carter E. Nelson, 20, cited for speeding 35/25, S Main/W Sherman Sts.

10:36 p.m. - Anna Bella Shevel, 19, cited for improper display, Wheeler/S Main Sts.

May 7

4:09 a.m. - Unauthorized use of motor vehicle reported in area of Brewster Rd./Lacomb Dr. According to LCSO, older Ford flatbed farm truck that was located parked "suspiciously" at that location. Owner was unaware that it had been stolen. No one was located with the truck. Report taken.

7:39 a.m. - William Hogue, 23, of Cannon Beach, cited for

speeding, 76/55, Hwy. 226/Cold Springs Rd.

12:17 p.m. - Fraud reported in 38000 block River Dr. According to LCSO, inmate at Linn County Jail had over \$4,000 taken from their account while they were in custody. Known suspect, who had access to the account, being investigated. Report taken.

1:46 p.m. - Crash reported in 41300 block Lacomb Dr. According to LCSO, Dodge Ram was stopped for school bus stop and minivan driver failed to notice and rear-ended the Dodge. Information was exchanged. No names listed. No citations issued. Both vehicles towed. Report taken.

2:11 p.m. - Caller reported recycling container missing in 32200 block Berlin Rd.

6:57 p.m. - Michael Hodson, 31, arrested on LMC warrant for failure to appear on traffic citation. Cited to appear June 10. 37000 block Middle Ridge Dr. Report taken.

8:04 p.m. - OSP responded to report of possible land mine in 43100 block McDowell Creek Dr. Investigation determined that buried item was old electric motor.

May 6

12:53 a.m. - Michael Rey Giles cited for criminal trespass I and false info, and cited on warrants with LMC and LCCC.

2:51 a.m. - Curt Allen Blasch, 45, cited on AMC warrants.

7:01 a.m. - Caller reported theft of tools from locked box truck, 2100 block Janna Ct. Loss valued at \$2,000. Report taken.

8:18 a.m. - Caller reported hit and run on parked car, 1000 block Charlie Ave.

9:02 a.m. - Kenneth Smith, 75, of Lebanon, cited for failure to obey traffic control device, 000 block Walker Rd.

9:27 a.m. - Gregory Rob-

inson, 37, of Keizer, cited for driving while suspended, driving uninsured, Walker Rd./2nd St.

11:03 a.m. - Ashlyn Pitts, 19, of Lebanon, cited for speeding, 62/45, 34000 block Brewster Rd.

11:49 a.m. - Jennifer Perle, 47, of Lebanon, cited for speeding, 70/45, 33800 block Brewster Rd.

12:58 p.m. - Aaron James Lovik, 39, cited for driving while suspended and driving uninsured, S 2nd/E Sts.

1:12 p.m. - Caller reported an elderly female was hit in the back of the legs by a shopping cart at Walmart. The male with the cart said nothing and

kept walking.

2:21 p.m. - Crash reported near milepost 12 on Highway 20. According to OSP, a Dodge Challenger driven by David Shawn Archer, 49, of Lebanon, pulled out of a residential driveway into the path of a westbound Mazda 6 driven by Jacob Allen Johnstone, 34, of Sweet Home. Archer was transported by Lebanon medics to hospital with "minor" injuries. Johnstone was transported by private vehicle. Mazda was towed, Dodge was pushed back into driveway from which it emerged.

2:36 p.m. - Caller reported someone stole their checkbook and wrote \$23,000 out of

their account. Report taken.

3:35 p.m. - Officer made fruit seller near library remove their stand because they didn't have a permit.

5:25 p.m. - Caller reported theft of cell phone, 400 block Mary St.

8:36 p.m. - Crash reported in 34500 block Santiam Hwy. OSP responded.

11:50 p.m. - Officer responded to fight at Knothole. Witness reported male was mad because someone cut him in line, he was asked to leave, he tried to fight a customer outside and punched a car window.

See more Public Safety reports at lebanonlocalnews.com.

COMP-Northwest again named Tier 1 medical school for primary care

By Emily Campbell

WesternU Communications Specialist

For the second consecutive year, U.S. News & World Report named Western University of Health Sciences' College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific (COMP) and COMP-Northwest as a Tier 1 institution for primary care training.

WesternU is one of 16 institutions in the top tier for primary care. The 2025 rankings place medical schools into one of four tiers. Tier 1 institutions were in the 85 percentile or higher of medical schools ranked. WesternU is the only osteopathic medical school ranked Tier 1 for primary care.

"We are deeply honored that Western University of Health Sciences has been recognized by U.S. News & World Report as a Tier 1 institution in Medical-Primary Care," said WesternU Pro-

vost and Chief Academic Officer Paula M. Crone, DO '92. "This distinction reflects the exceptional commitment of our faculty, students and staff at the College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific and COMP-Northwest to advancing health care through compassionate, community-based education. It underscores our mission to prepare outstanding physicians who are making a meaningful difference in communities across the nation."

COMP and COMP-Northwest were also ranked No. 6 for Most Graduates Practicing in Primary Care. This ranking is based on the percentage of each school's 2016-2018 medical and osteopathic graduates practicing direct patient care in primary care fields. As part of the 2025 National Residency Match cycle, 57% of the COMP-Northwest Class of 2025 and 58% of the

COMP Class of 2025 placed into primary care specialties.

"We are incredibly honored and excited to be recognized by the U.S. News & World Report for the second year in a row as a Tier 1 institution for primary care training," said Lisa Warren, DO '01, MBA, Dean of the COMP and COMP-Northwest. "This recognition reflects our unwavering commitment to our students, our communities and our mission rooted in humanism, as we prepare future physicians to make a meaningful impact on their patients and the health of the communities they serve."

COMP and COMP-Northwest also ranked in the following categories: Most Graduates Practicing in Health Professional Shortage Areas (#123) and Most Graduates Practicing in Rural Areas (#88); Tier 4 in Best Medical Schools: Research.

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REAL ESTATE SOLD

Following are Lebanon, Sweet Home, and Brownsville area real estate transactions recorded with the county during late March and April 2025. These are not properties for sale, and some transactions may represent a change in ownership within a family or corporation. Properties are listed by address, property/residence size and purchase price:

190 Main St., Brownsville; 1036 sq.ft., One story, two bedroom, 1 ½ bath Built in 1981; 0.35 acres; \$435,000.

4944 Mimosa Cir., Sweet Home; 1982 sq.ft., Two story, three bedroom, 2 ½ bath Built in 2006; 0.23 acres; \$412,500.

1111 Spruce St., Sweet Home; 832 sq.ft., One story,

four bedroom, two-bath Built in 1964; 0.23 acres; \$280,000.

4715 Long St., Sweet Home; additional details not listed; 0.35 acres; \$350,000.

1073 North River Dr., Sweet Home; 1296 sq.ft., Double wide mobile home, two bedroom, two-bath Built in 2016; 4.61 acres; \$492,000.

433 Mary St., Lebanon; 1100 sq.ft., One story, one-bath Built in 1950; 0.17 acres; \$125,000.

711 Grant St., Lebanon; 720 sq.ft., One story, two bedroom, one-bath Built in 1952; 0.18 acres; \$225,000.

809 Stonebrook St., Brownsville; 1007 sq.ft., One story, three bedroom, two-

bath Built in 2024; 0.12 acres; \$234,538.

2187 Mill St., Lebanon; additional details not listed; 0.2 acres; \$40,500.

372 6th St., Lebanon; 1222 sq.ft., One story with attic, three bedroom, one-bath Built in 1948; 0.2 acres; \$325,000.

1170 Grant Pl., Lebanon; 1050 sq.ft., One story, three bedroom, one-bath Built in 1977; 0.3 acres; \$325,000.

323 Lydia Ln., Lebanon; 1586 sq.ft., One story, three bedroom, 2 ½ bath Built in 2013; 0.15 acres; \$425,000.

981 Airport Rd., Lebanon; 1448 sq.ft., One story with attic, three bedroom, one-bath Built in 1947; 0.47 acres;

in 1997; 0.33 acres; \$585,000.

980 Washburn St., Brownsville; 1429 sq.ft., One story, four bedroom, 2 ½ bath Built in 1978; 0.9 acres; \$615,000.

35335 Lacombe Rd., Lebanon; 4968 sq.ft., Two story, four bedroom, 4 ½ bath Built in 2008; 3.95 acres; \$1,087,500.

33549 Millview Way, Lebanon; 865 sq.ft., One story, two bedroom, one-bath Built in 1960; 0.15 acres; \$323,000.

144 Hausman Ave., Brownsville; 1374 sq.ft., One story, three bedroom, two-bath Built in 2006; 0.15 acres; \$430,000.

34204 Lacombe Rd., Lebanon; additional details not listed; \$750,000.

2076 Cedar St., Sweet Home; 1460 sq.ft., One story, three bedroom, one-bath Built in 1951; 0.2 acres; \$250,000.

32320 Weldon Rd., Lebanon; 1730 sq.ft., One story with attic, two bedroom, two-bath Built in 1985; 13 acres; \$730,000.

881 Glenwood St., Lebanon; 2120 sq.ft., Two story, six bedroom, 2 ½ bath Built in 1977; 0.3 acres; \$438,195.

322 Shannon Pl., Lebanon; 2164 sq.ft., Two story, three bedroom, 2 ½ bath Built in 2007; 0.14 acres; \$455,000.

42121 Moran Ln., Lebanon; 1190 sq.ft., One story, three bedroom, two-bath Built in 1971; 5.01 acres; \$499,000.

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New political groups raising voices in election

New political groups are popping up this election cycle. Members of the new bipartisan East Lebanon Indivisible group held its first set of rallies – a “May Day” rally – on May 1 to protest the reported massive federal layoffs.

According to a press release sent by the group, Indivisible is a national grassroots movement with a mission to “elect progressive leaders and rebuild the country’s democracy.” The Lebanon chapter was founded by Sandra Law, of Lebanon, and Karen Schueler, of Sweet Home, and promoted by Linn County Democrats.

One of the May Day rallies was sponsored by Lebanon 50501, another new “grassroots group fighting to preserve democratic institutions and civil liberties.” Based on social media indications, Lebanon 50501 is also supported by democrats.

A week later, members of the new Citizens For Lebanon PAC held a “honk and wave” at Academy Square to showcase candidates they’re endorsing in this month’s election cycle. According to their website, Citizens For Lebanon supports non-partisan candidates focused on community and encourages voter participation.



Photo courtesy of Julie Miller
Members of Citizens For Lebanon raise signs for endorsed school board and aquatic board candidates.



Photo courtesy of Linda Zeidrich
Indivisible members hold signs protesting federal layoffs.



Photo courtesy of Marilyn Belcher
The second gathering of East Linn Indivisible included introductions of school board candidates.

Planners OK 'patchwork' of street annexations

By Sarah Brown
Lebanon Local

The Planning Commission held two public hearings covering an administrative review for a three-unit multifamily proposal and annexations during its April 16 meeting.

Property owners of 1008 Hiatt St, on the southwest corner of Oak and Hiatt streets, requested approval for a three-unit multi-family development within the existing structures, and a variance for lot size, setback and vehicle maneuvering.

Essentially, the subject property already has a single family home with an unattached accessory building consisting of two single garages. Above one garage is an occupied dwelling, and above the other garage is space that is currently being used as storage. The request is to convert the storage space into a studio apartment.

Motions for approval passed unanimously.

The second public hearing included a request from the City of Lebanon to annex six different street segments.

In her report on the matter, Community Development Director Kelly Hart explained that as annexations occurred throughout the city over time, some applications included annexation of the public right-of-way along the length of the property segment, while others did not, resulting in a patchwork of city and county jurisdiction throughout the street network.

The street segments for annexation are on Crowfoot Road, Kees Street, Wassom Street, and three on Stoltz Hill Road.

“I want to be very clear that these are only right-of-way segments,” Hart said. “This is not anybody’s private property.”

The commission passed the annexations unanimously.



Photo courtesy of Lebanon Fire District
Burn barrel suspected in shop fire
Fire crews responded to a fully involved shop fire on May 8 that prompted a second-alarm response. The 30-by-30-foot structure was fully engulfed upon arrival, with exposures threatened on all sides. The fire was brought under control by multiple agencies. One firefighter sustained minor injuries during operations and was transported to a local hospital. The firefighter has since been treated and released. Further investigation determined the fire likely originated from a burn barrel near the structure.

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HAND IN HAND

From page 1

er and Perry shared at the forum examples on how to help autistic children improve social skills, and manage emotions and physical coordination through agricultural labor and equestrian treatment.

“David’s speech touched a mother with autism, who said it was the biggest gain for her to come to the United Nations meeting and see the hope of independence for autistic children,” Ling wrote.

The way Ling described Hand in Hand’s method, she wrote, “The method is unique. Do not use sandpaper to grind the glass bottle, but to give parents a hammer, find a breakthrough point, break the bottle, pull the child out of the inside, and then help them grow.”

As Berger succinctly puts it, “Raise the bar. Expect a lot. And take whatever time it takes to get them there.”

Yu Zeng and Jason Feng, a Chinese-American couple living near Seattle, have been visiting Hand in Hand Farm regularly for five years now.

It was Zeng who first brought their oldest child, Albert, to the farm’s week-long family camp in 2020.

At that time, he was a teenager who couldn’t sit still, ignored people if he didn’t want to do something, expressed tics through flailing-arms and hissing noises, had a short attention span, talked for hours on his favorite subjects, and argued for months if his parents had tried to show him how to do something correctly.

But, Berger noted, Albert is not that way any more.



Photo by Sarah Brown

Dave Berger, Athena Perry and Hand in Hand Farm were awarded medals and a certificate of honor for the impact they’re making on Asian families with autistic children.

When Zeng returned home after one week at the farm, Feng noticed something.

“The most significant change that I remember after the first week is the tic,” he said. “It’s the tics that’s driving us crazy, he always does that. And then after that one week, I think that’s very well under control.”

Feng recalled noticing his son was conscious about his tics and was trying to control them.

“We told him, ‘You can’t do that, you can’t make the noise’ how many times, I don’t know. But he never made an effort to actually control that. But after that week, I can see the effort to control that,” he said.

Berger explained that Albert met two other “very autistic” boys at the farm who had learned to control their own tics. According to him, Albert told the boys he’s supposed to have tics because he’s autistic, but the boys told him it’s not true.

“We have people in dif-

ferent stages of progress, and the people that are further ahead that have gotten through it further, they become kind of like role models for the people that are in the middle of it,” Perry said.

The training at Hand in Hand, Feng said, gave his family a foundation that allowed Albert to take correction and make self improvements.

“Through their training he was able to recognize that sometimes he’s wrong, and then the reason why we try to correct him is because we love him, we want him to improve,” Feng said. “And somehow he got that idea from these two (Berger and Perry).”

Zeng returned to the farm with her other kids, and soon the whole family was making regular trips.

“We realized this is a tremendous place for the whole family,” Zeng said.

Six months later, a social group the Fengs belonged to for families with autistic children also drove down to

Lacomb to see how Berger and Perry could help them.

“They saw Albert and nobody could imagine the huge difference,” Zeng said.

About 20 families from the social group attended family camp in April 2021. Today, many of those families and others who’ve heard about Hand in Hand by word of mouth continue to return for family camps and parenting classes.

In the five years they have been attending, Zeng and Feng said they have changed as parents and their son Albert has changed so much that he can now hold down a job and live independently to a great degree. They say he lives on his own, can take direction with a good attitude and focus on a project for long periods of time. And, of course, the tics are under control.

“He is totally another person from five years ago, and I believe I also have changed a lot,” Zeng said.

Berger and Perry are not only training children, she said. They are also training parents.

“My conclusion of why this system works is they’re not just fixing the kids,” Feng said. “All the other places, they treat the kids; they never teach the parent how to correctly handle all sorts of situations. We are learning how to parent while we’re here. I think that’s the reason why we keep coming back.”

Feng and Zeng now operate Seattle Hand in Hand, an extension of the organization that provides training closer to home for the families who have gone through the Lacomb camps and classes.

In the two-plus decades

that Berger and Perry have been teaching families how to live in a society with expectations, they’ve learned that some people may disagree with their straightforward methods, and that many “experts” believe it’s better to leave children unfettered.

Berger said he even received a call from a couple of Albert’s teachers, berating him for giving his parents hope that Albert could be employable and that Berger is “removing the essence of Albert’s being.”

“We kind of operate on a different paradigm,” Perry said.

“Autistic people are people. We can have the same expectations of them as far as people go. It might take them a while longer to learn, that’s all. It takes more patience, more persistence, more tries, maybe a lot more time, but we have the same goal for everybody.”

That was a message that Zeng and Feng said they’ve never heard from any of the other groups they’ve talked to. Before Hand in Hand Farm altered their course, they were being taught that they should prepare to place Albert in a care home where he would be taken care of for the rest of his life, Feng said.

“This is the place that gave us hope,” he said. “And plus we have those role models in front of us that says, ‘No, Albert doesn’t need to just sit in the house all day for the rest of his life. He can actually maybe hold a job. He can actually be independent to some degree.’”

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Gardening Party at Veterans Home

Photo by Miriam Swanson

Veterans and visitors enjoy a display of classic vehicles and other fun stuff at the Oregon Veterans Home’s Gardening Party, held April 26. The event included a petting zoo, children’s crafts, plant and seed swaps, succulent planting, building and painting projects and more.