

## Police identify remains found in 1976 east of Sweet Home

**The New Era Staff**  
Oregon State Police announced Tuesday, Sept. 16, that they have identified the skeletal remains of a young woman discovered 49 years ago approximately 17 miles east of Sweet Home.  
On July 24, 1976, the skeletal remains of the young woman were found in the area of Wolf Creek, which runs parallel to Swamp Mountain Road between Cascadia Park and Sweet Home Fire Station 24.

In June the remains were positively identified as Marion Vinetta Nagle McWhorter, OSP announced in a statement on Sept. 16. McWhorter had last been seen at a Tigard shopping



This is a forensic artist's drawing from evidence recovered following the death of Marion McWhorter.

mall in 1974. She was 21 years old at the time and was never heard from again.  
In 1976, a moss hunter discovered a skull with several teeth and notified local law enforcement immediately. The New Era reported then that the moss hunter was David Allen Shearer, 20, of Long Beach, Calif.

The Linn County Sheriff's Office deputies and explorers from Search and Rescue Post 64 of Albany accompanied Shearer back to the site, where they recovered additional skeletal remains.

Along with the remains, investigators located a clog-style shoe, a fraying fringed leather coat, a leather belt with Native American-style beadwork, two metal rings, and a pair of degraded Levi's jeans, which were retained as evidence.

The skeletal remains were transferred to the Oregon State Medical Examiner's Office, where they were examined by a pathologist and odontologist. The findings of

See Identified, Page 11

## Fire Training



A firefighter sprays water to control flames during a training exercise Wednesday, Sept. 17, on the Old Mill Property north of 24th Avenue. See more details and photos on page 9.

Photo by Scott Swanson



Weddle Bridge gates are locked due to vandalism that recently began "escalating" according to city officials.

Photo by Scott Swanson

## Vandalism closes Weddle Bridge

**By Sarah Brown  
Of The New Era**  
The City of Sweet Home announced on Monday, Sept. 15, that Weddle Bridge is now closed to public access due to "ongoing and escalating issues with vandalism."

Deputy City Manager Cecily Pretty told The New Era that the vandalism the city has been dealing with includes trash, painting/tagging, carving into the wood, evidence of fires under the bridge, illegal dumping, removal of wood planks, defacing of signage, and damage to a security camera.

Since the beginning of the school year the bridge has attracted groups of juveniles who congregate on it, mostly after school.  
"We experience issues at least weekly right now, and there does seem to be a correlation between increases in incidents and school being in session," Pretty said.  
The bridge will be closed "until further notice."  
Pretty said the city needs to assess what other measures they might be able to take to improve security of the bridge (such as increased foot patrols and more cameras), as well as determine if

the city has the budget and staffing to support it.  
"We will likely open the bridge up for large community events, such as Harvest Festival, but we expect it will otherwise remain closed for the foreseeable future," she said.  
The city asks that everyone respect the gates now blocking off the bridge, and not climb on the bridge. Accessing the bridge while the gates are closed is considered trespassing.  
If anyone sees someone damaging the bridge or park, report it at (541) 367-5181.

Hometown  
Newspaper of  
**LARRY D.  
BROWN**



**HUSKY GIRLS SCORE  
BIG WIN IN  
SOCCER  
PAGE 10**



**LOCAL FAMILY GETS  
THEIR OWN HOME FROM  
HABITAT FOR HUMANITY  
PAGE 8**



**NEW ARCADE IN  
LEBANON PROVIDES  
'KINESTHETIC' FUN  
PAGE 14**

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# OBITUARIES

## Alta Cochell

March 3, 1942 - Sept. 12, 2025  
Alta Katherine Cochell passed away on Sept. 12, 2025, in Cottage Grove, at the age of 83.

Born on March 3, 1942, to Ralph and Mabel Sullivan in Sweet Home, Alta - known to everyone as Kathy - was the youngest of three children. She grew up in nearby Holley alongside her brothers, Leo and Robert.



A graduate of Sweet Home Union High School in 1960, she married Richard Cochell later that year at Holley Church. The couple made their home in Cottage Grove, where they raised their family.

Kathy worked as a teacher's aide at Bohemia Elementary School in Cottage Grove for 20 years. Her coworkers remember her for her positive spirit and genuine concern for the students and staff whose lives she touched.

Kathy's greatest loves in life were her Lord Jesus, her husband and her family. She and her family were members of the Church of Christ at 6th and Gibbs in Cottage Grove, where Kathy often played piano during worship services.

She began playing piano as a child and continued to find joy in music throughout her life. She also loved reading and shared this passion with her children and grandchildren.

Kathy was preceded in death by her parents and her brothers.

She is survived by her husband of 65 years, Richard; daughter Lenette Bailey of Cottage Grove; two sons, Gale Cochell of Oasis, Idaho and Trevor Cochell of Cottage Grove; six grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

Kathy will be remembered by all who knew and loved her as a kind and gentle soul who was dedicated to her Lord and devoted to her family.

A celebration of life was held Sept. 20 at the Church of Christ at 6th and Gibbs.

Arrangements are in the care of Smith-Lund-Mills Funeral Chapel and Crematorium.

*Paid Obituary*

## Frank Brown

Feb. 24, 1961 - Aug. 27, 2025

Frank Brown, 64, of Lebanon, recently of Sweet Home, passed away after a battle with liver cancer.

He was born Feb. 24, 1961, in Albany to Ray and Helen Brown.

He is survived by his wife, Shawn Brown; parents Roy and Helen Brown of Soda-ville; brothers Bobby Brown of Vancouver, Wash.; Jimmy Brown of Albany, and Johnny Brown of Sweet Home; daughter Dana Anderson of Albany; step-daughter Ashley Lowery of Salem; son Josh Brown of Dallas; and stepson Joshua Jackson of Salem; nieces and nephews; grandchildren; and great-grandchildren.

He was preceded in death

by his sister Barbara.

## Donald Blankenship

June 11, 1952 - Sept. 13, 2025  
Donald Blankenship, 73, of Sweet Home, passed away Sept. 13, 2025.

He was born June 11, 1952, to Helen L. (Hill) and Boyd L.D. Blankenship in Hector, Ark.



He graduated from Sweet Home High School and attended Kirkland Northwest Bible College and Oral Roberts Bible College in Tulsa, Okla.

Donald was a restaurant cook; his last job was at the Taft Home in Portland. He moved back to Sweet Home in 2015.

Donald loved his agates. He enjoyed going to the lake and finding strange wood to whittle. He liked plants of all kinds. He was a very good artist, using oil paint as his medium. Donald also played the piano and was very talented.

He is survived by his brother, Paul Blankenship of Shedd, and sister Charollette (Leach) Popovic of Yuma, Ariz.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Helen and Boyd Blankenship; and sister Janice Majors.

A celebration of life will be held at 11:30 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 4, at Kings Chapel, 65 West Grant St., Lebanon.

Sweet Home Funeral Chapel is handling the arrangements.

## Jerry Hay

April 8, 1955 - Sept. 5, 2025

Jerry Don Hay, 70, of Sweet Home, passed away on Sept. 5, 2025, at Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center in Corvallis.

Jerry was born on April 8, 1955, in Yankton, S.D., to John Neil Hay, Sr. and LaVern Frances (Daniels) Hay.



He was the second born of their six children. Jerry lived in South Dakota, New York, Arizona, and California, before the family settled in Sweet Home in the summer of 1965.

Jerry graduated from Sweet Home High School in 1973. While in high school he competed on the swimming team.

Following high school, Jerry attended both Southern Oregon State College (now SOU) and Linn-Benton Community College.

During summer breaks, Jerry fire watched for Willamette Industries and also helped build forest roads as a way to earn money for college.

Through that work, he came to know the surrounding woods like the back of his hand. He could take you anywhere you wanted to go up in the hills surrounding the Sweet Home area.

Ultimately, Jerry decided not to pursue a college degree. He went to work for Tomco Mill, followed by Willamette Industries, Weyerhaeuser, and Murphy, where he retired in 2018.

Through the knowledge he gained in his early work life, Jerry knew the timber roads well, and that knowledge came in handy while hunting.

He knew the places to go and how to get there. Jerry was an avid hunter and had many mounted deer racks to show for it. In his younger years, he did a lot of steelhead, salmon, and trout fishing.

In 2002, at a barbecue at the home of mutual friends, Jerry met Bev Gaskey. That chance meeting turned into a 23-year love story which resulted in their marriage on Aug. 20, 2016.

Jerry is survived by his wife, Bev; and the two daughters he never knew he wanted: step-daughters Leslie Anderson (Zack Graber), and Jenna Anderson (Jake Jeppson); grandchildren Justin Graber, Emma Graber, and Mason Flores; brother Jim (Lori) and sister Danielle Hanscam (Steve), all of Sweet Home; brother Scott (Gretchen) of Mount Angel; sister-in-law Kathy Hay of Sweet Home; sister-in-law Angie Houck Hay of Prineville; brother-in-law Larry Gaskey of Sweet Home; and many nieces, nephews, great-nieces, and great-nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents, John (2013) and LaVern (2018) Hay; his in-laws, Sonny (2004) and Maggie (2003) Gaskey; brothers John (2019) and Clark (2024); and nephew Casey Hanscam (2015).

A celebration of Jerry's life will be held at a later date.

Sweet Home Funeral Chapel is handling the arrangements.

*Paid Obituary*

## Clara Lowe

Nov. 1, 1948 - Sept. 15, 2025

Clara Kathleen Lowe, 76, of Sweet Home, passed away Sept. 15, 2025.

She was born Nov. 1, 1948, to Clara (Counts) and Milton Presley in Lebanon.

She resided in Lebanon until she was married. She

moved to Brownsville for a short time, then settled in Sweet Home area, where she lived for over 50 years.

Clara was a licensed hairdresser and worked several years at the Point Restaurant as a kitchen aid and baker.

She loved to decorate cakes, enjoyed crocheting and various needle point projects. Clara adored spending time with her grandchildren.

She is survived by her daughter, Karri (Matt) Staneart of Corvallis; son Jason (Christy Perrigo) Lowe of Sweet Home; brother Jeff Presley of Arkansas; and five grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Leland Lowe; brother Milford Presley; father Milton Presley; mother Clara Presley and daughter-in-law Darlinda Lowe.

A graveside service will be held at 3 p.m. Friday, Sept. 26, at Gilliland Cemetery.

Sweet Home Funeral Chapel is handling the arrangements.

## Michael Northern

April 7, 2005 - Sept. 6, 2025

Michael W. Northern, 20, of Sweet Home, passed away Sept. 6, 2025.

He was born April 7, 2005, to Nicole Schrick and James Northern in Albany, Oregon.



He graduated from McNary High School and attended Cheme-keta Community College in Salem. Most recently, he was going to truck driving school and about to get his CDL.

Michael enjoyed tinkering with electronic and automotive machinery. He liked playing Dungeon and Dragons and Magic: The Gathering card game.

He is survived by his father, James Northern of Sweet Home; mother Nicole Schrick of Lebanon; brother Ryan Schrick of Sweet Home; sister Veronica Schrick of Salem; aunt Robbie Blevins; uncles Rocky Morse and Andy Schrick; and grandmother Coleen Schrick.

He was preceded in death by his grandpa Robert Schrick, who passed on the same day as he did.

A memorial service will be at 1 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 30, at Sweet Home Funeral Chapel, followed by a niche placement at Gilliland Cemetery.

Sweet Home Funeral Chapel is handling the arrangements.

**See Obituaries, Page 3**

### Back in Old South Bend Stomping Grounds

The New Era went with Allen Hall and daughter Courtney Hankins on a trip to South Bend, Wash., to visit where Allen was born and grew up. Allen had been wanting to take his daughter to his birth place for quite some time and finally made it happen this summer. They also visited the cemetery where Allen's grandparents, Courtney's great-grandparents were buried in Menlo, Wash., before returning home.





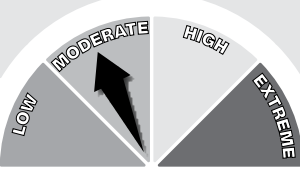
**MEMORY MAKING**  
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Call Michael:  
**541-797-5445**

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TEMPERATURES				FORECAST			
DATE	HIGH	LOW	PRECIP	DAY	WEATHER	HIGH	LOW
September 16	93	45	0.00	Thur	Sunny	77	47
September 17	82	51	0.00	Fri	Mostly Sunny	78	49
September 18	77	50	0.00	Sat	Partly Cloudy	81	53
September 19	80	49	0.00	Sun	Partly Cloudy	74	53
September 20	77	54	0.00	Mon	AM Showers	70	51
September 21	69	51	0.00	Tues	Partly Cloudy	69	50
September 22	69	46	0.00	Wed	Partly Cloudy	74	52
PRECIPITATION				LAKE LEVELS			
Year to date: 19.91				Foster Reservoir: 628.4			
September 24, 2024: 21.02				Green Peter Res.: 905.2			



TODAYS FIRE DANGER IS  
**MODERATE**

The fire danger information provided is current at the time of publication. For the latest and most accurate updates, please visit: [oregon.gov/odf](http://oregon.gov/odf)

OBITUARIES

From page 2

**Doyle Offutt**  
Nov. 12, 1944 - Sept. 6, 2025

Doyle Wayne Offutt, 80, of Sweet Home, passed away Sept. 6, 2025.

He was born Nov. 12, 1944 in Claude, Texas.

He served in the Army National Guard and lived in Sweet Home since 1983.

Doyle liked to work with his hands and enjoyed working in his shop making things out of wood or metal. He enjoyed fishing and watching old movies. He loved to eat, especially watermelon and peanuts.

Doyle is survived by his partner of 35 years, Nancy Alverson.

He was preceded in death by his parents; sister Sherry; and brothers James and Clyde.

Sweet Home Funeral Chapel is handling the arrangements.

**Ronald Schrick**  
Dec. 9, 1950 - Sept. 6, 2025

Ronald Louis Schrick, 74, passed away Sept. 6, 2025.

He was born Dec. 9, 1950, to Margaret (Kypers) and Joseph Schrick in Lebanon.

Ronald graduated from Stayton High School. He served in the Navy from 1969, including in Vietnam, and retired in 1989.

Ronald liked to talk and visit with people. He enjoyed CB and HAM radio.

He is survived by his children, Peggy Schrick of Keizer, Andy Schrick of Sweet Home, and Nicole Schrick of Lebanon; brother Dennis, sister Roberta; and two grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his brother Dwayne; and grandson Michael Northern, who passed on the same day as he did.

Sweet Home Funeral Chapel is handling the arrangements.

**Death Notices**  
**Anne Mehn**  
Dec. 17, 1934 - Sept. 18, 2025

Anne Virginia Mehn, 90, of Sweet Home, passed away Sept. 18, 2025.

Sweet Home Funeral Chapel is handling the arrangements. For updated information, visit [www.sweethomefuneral.com](http://www.sweethomefuneral.com).

PUBLIC SAFETY

Information for the Public Safety report and Courts in The New Era is sourced from local law enforcement and fire agencies. Addresses provided generally denote the location of the incident or arrest, occasionally indicating the origin of the call. 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](http://sweethomenews.com) as information becomes available. Also, due to space limitations in our paper editions, content may be restricted to the most recent information, and a more extensive version of the Public Safety Report will be available at [sweethomenews.com](http://sweethomenews.com).

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); SHPD (Sweet Home Police Department); OSP (Oregon State Police); LCCC (Linn County Circuit Court); LCJC (Linn County Justice Court); SHMC (Sweet Home Municipal Court); LMC (Lebanon Municipal Court); AMC (Albany Municipal Court); 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).

**Sept. 21**  
12:56 a.m. - Mandy House, 41, of Sweet Home, arrested for giving false information to law enforcement officer, failure to carry and present a license, and for warrant. Cited for driving while suspended. Osage St./12th Ave. Report taken.

12:56 a.m. - Rachelle Corbin, 39, of Sweet Home, cited for driving while suspended, driving uninsured, 1400 block Long St.

1:45 p.m. - Trespass reported in 43600 block Ames Creek Rd. Matter was resolved, but subjects were warned of fire danger still in effect and of consequences for further violations. Further details unavailable.

3:31 p.m. - Caller reported vehicle blocking driveway in 4600 block Main St., adding that male and female got out of vehicle and left on foot. Officer contacted vehicle owner, who stated he had run out of gas and would get it moved as soon as he could refuel.

4:39 p.m. - Caller report-

ed walker and wallet taken from resident in Wiley Creek Community, 5050 Mountain Fir St. Officer responded, report taken for theft III. Value approximately \$50.

4:44 p.m. - Tyler Upmeyer, 31, cited for offensive littering after report of illegal camping in 49000 block Quartzville Rd. Upmeyer allegedly dumped gray and black water on ground. Report taken.

5:52 p.m. - Abandoned vehicle located on BLM land in 51200 block Quartzville Rd.

5:54 p.m. - Joshua Kealo-hauni Ben Leslie, 37, arrested for criminal trespass II, resisting arrest after caller reported male who was trespassed from 1700 block Spruce St. continued to return and was asking about her daughter. Leslie cited and released.

6:06 p.m. - Ervin Smith, 72, cited for three counts of dog at large, SHPD, 1950 Main St. According to SHPD, witnesses said the dog was running loose and knocked a woman down as she walked down the street.

6:55 p.m. - Lock reported stolen from private timber gate in 44600 block Wiley Creek Dr. Report taken.

11:14 p.m. - Daniell Miles, 39, cited for driving while suspended, driving uninsured, speeding 55/45, Main St./53rd Ave. Vehicle towed.

**Sept. 20**  
12:42 a.m. - LCSO patrol vehicle and deer collided in 25100 block Gap Rd. Deer could not be located following collision; patrol vehicle undamaged.

11:09 a.m. - Austin Alan Ross, 27, arrested by LCSO on SHMC warrants for FTA in multiple theft cases, FTA in eluding case and in theft case. Cited to appear Oct. 22.

11:41 a.m. - Caller reported someone broke locks on two sheds at Freedom Hill Church, 2470 Main St. Officer responded, report taken for criminal misconduct II, theft III. Approximate value \$50.

12:11 p.m. - Randall McCaffery, 67, of Lebanon, cited for criminal trespass II after

deputy responded to report of someone locked behind Cascade Timber Consulting McDowell Creek 600 gate, 43000 block McDowell Creek Rd. Report taken.

12:16 p.m. - Ashley Fagan, 34, of Sweet Home, arrested on active felony warrant and cited for giving false information to law enforcement officer, and for warrant, 29200 block Pleasant Valley Rd. Report taken.

2:19 p.m. - Vance Eugene Marshall, 43, arrested by Lane County Sheriff's Office on SHMC warrant for FTC in criminal misconduct case. Cited to appear Oct. 22.

2:44 p.m. - Deputy provided escort for intoxicated subject to their residence, 100 block Stanard Ave., Brownsville.

3:00 p.m. - Joshua Kealo-hauni Ben Leslie, 37, arrested for criminal trespass II after caller from Safeway, 1540 Main St., reported that Leslie, who had been tres-

passed, was back and refused to leave. Cited and released.

5:53 p.m. - Caller reported hit and run in 1500 block 12th Ave. Officer responded, report taken for hit and run-property. Damage estimated at \$500.

5:57 p.m. - Nick Begrin, 45, of Sweet Home, cited for driving while suspended, LCCC warrant for FTA, LMC warrant for contempt of court, and AMC warrant for FTA. 45000 block Quartzville Rd. Report taken.

6:08 p.m. - Brandy Lee Dozier, 40, arrested by Albany police on SHMC warrant for FTC in criminal driving case. Cited to appear Oct. 22.

7:10 p.m. - Adrian Dietz, 18, cited for use of mobile communications device while operating vehicle following hit and run crash in 900 block Pinetop St. According to SHPD, caller reported gray sedan hit rock, then drove

See Public Safety, Page 4

CIRCUIT COURT

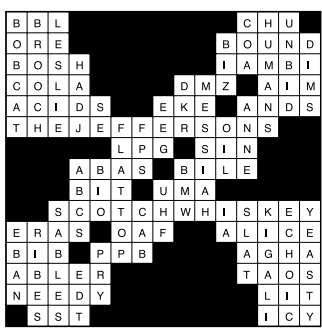
**Warrants are out on the following individuals:** Travis Alexander Ayres, Raymond Paul Binford, Hope Marie Connors, Ashlee Dee Flanagan, Sean Doyle Gay, Nicholas Gregory Godell, Aaron Thomas Halvorson, Noe Hernandez-Reyes, Michael Trevor Hilton, Faron Walter Kennedy, Tyler Bruce Lanz, Charles James Marvel, Thomas Junior McCarthey, Bryce William McGowan, Eric Wayne McKnight, Carrie Lynne Miller, James Keith Mortensen, Nicholas Alan Nelson, Luis Gerardo Pacheco-Servin, Daniel Austin Phillips, Sean Ever Robinson, Tammy Lavonn Robinson, James Ryan Routon, Joshua Alexander Williams

**Sarah Emily Littell, 49,** sentenced Sept. 5 to five days compensatory service in lieu of jail and 12 mos bench probation after pleading no contest to attempt to commit a Class A misdemeanor - DV assault IV.

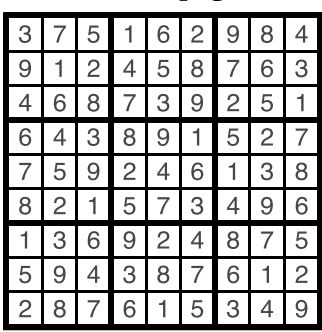
**Danner Levi Massey, 22,** sentenced Sept. 15 to 41 mos. with the Oregon Dept.

of Corrections and 36 mos. post-prison supervision after pleading guilty to encouraging child sexual abuse I. Three additional counts of the same were dismissed.

**Crossword KEY**  
Puzzle on page 13



**SUDOKU KEY**  
Puzzle on page 13





## FROM OUR FILES



Small log veneer plant, first phase of TOMCO Inc.'s new industrial complex, is taking shape in 1975. The building will be the largest built in the Sweet Home area in 15 years.

### Sept. 28, 1950

As many as 16 arrests were made this week on a variety of charges. Leading the parade of offenders were four persons charged with drunkenness, followed by three minor traffic cases, three persons driving without a license, two minors in possession of alcohol, and one each on speeding, hit and run, reckless driving and disorderly conduct charges. Meanwhile, thefts of power saws, other tools, measuring tapes and cash were reported.

### Sept. 25, 1975

A Cascadia man, Bruce Richard Eichenberger, 36, was found guilty of the murder of James Robert Brown, 65, also of Cascadia. Brown was shot as he stood in the Maples Grocery Store. The defense attorney said Eichenberger was extremely drunk at the time and had no intention of murdering Brown. The prosecutor said Eichenberger's wife was raped by Brown and the defendant told her he would take care of the matter.

Sweet Home Community Chapel is using a unique fundraising idea by giving away money. Based on the parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30), the church members were each given \$5 to use in whatever ca-

capacity they wished to raise money for the church. Frank McCubbins held a turkey shoot, Les Austin held a horse show, and Steve Nelson offered airplane rides. Other services offered included car washes, drywall installation, drawing, welding, pottery, automotive, electrical, and cleaning. There were also sales of jams and breads, jewelry, buttons, paintings, plants, macrame hanging pots, wood and leather crafts, dolls, stocking caps, pillows, pies and more.

### Sept. 27, 2000

A Corps of Engineers employee pulled 83-year-old Lloyd Randall, a Lebanon man, from Green Peter Reservoir this week. The employee, Joe Stutzer, saw a backpack bobbing in the water near Billings Point. Attached to the backpack was Randall, who had been fishing nearby. Stutzer and another man pulled Randall to a less-steep embankment, and other Corps employees rigged a stretcher together to pull the exhausted man to safety. Randall needed no medical assistance.

East Linn Museum got a new facelift with new Smurfboard replacing old siding. Much of the work was done by volunteers.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### 'Christian nationalism' not constitutional

Editor:

Thank you for your opinion in the Sept. 16 issue about the Charlie Kirk murder and what it makes us think about as Americans. We agree that after violent crimes like this, people start asking tough questions about ourselves and our country.

While you correctly mentioned our Constitution and Bill of Rights, we have some concerns about what you wrote.

You recommended a film called "Truth Rising," made by the religious group Focus on the Family. Many truths are discussed in the film, using this film to explain society's differences is a problem because it promotes a Christian Nationalist view.

This is not what the Constitution or America's history supports. While the First Amendment protects our freedom to practice religion, it also guarantees our right to be free from the government forcing religion on us.

Americans have a guarantee that church and government remain separate, so that the very personal decisions of religious belief can be made without government oversight. The film also talks about how many Americans feel hopeless today, compared to a generation or two ago. Maybe that's because our government isn't working for most people anymore, but for a few.

Charlie Kirk did promote dialog, but his ideas did not encourage respect or equal

treatment for all. No matter what he said, we are deeply troubled that he was murdered. No one deserves violent treatment for their beliefs, speech or peaceful assembly.

The First Amendment guarantees that. Our country is no place for any type of violence – especially political violence used to silence and divide us. We need tolerance, which means respecting and listening to others, even if they are different from us or say things we do not agree with.

Tolerance means trying to understand different opinions, not judging people unfairly, and working together to find solutions that help most of us. This simple effort of kindness and fair-mindedness is how we make a good, strong country. Right now, it seems like many problems come from people simply not respecting each other.

Our Constitution and Bill of Rights are essential and should be protected. They provide the foundation we all can agree on. But we must keep learning and fighting for these principles.

If we don't, we could lose the freedom and rights we have. We are stronger together, and everyone deserves fairness and justice—even those we disagree with or don't want to hear from. We must stand indivisible, with liberty and justice for all...

In this spirit, we are a group made up of neighbors who want to find common ground based on American values like community, the Consti-

tution, and the Bill of Rights. We have been holding flash mobs (quick demonstrations) in support of our Constitution/Bill of Rights for the past few weeks in front of Sweet Home City Hall.

We have had a very good response from our neighbors, including a few who stop to join us (we have extra signs), and many who honk and wave. But there is one fellow who has stopped on a couple of occasions to preach to us about Christian Nationalistic principles.

We try to engage positively and peacefully with him, reminding him of the First Amendment, however, he is aggressive, and makes personal and unfounded accusations which are hurtful and disrespectful.

We felt obligated to submit this letter to remind us of our common foundation as Americans. Leaving religion out of the discussion (or at least ensuring we all understand the Constitutional principles of separation of church and state) will help us to return to that center so that we can have peaceful dialog and work together to reduce violence and preserve our freedom.

You might see us holding positive signs about democracy that remind us all of what we share as Americans. We invite you to join us!

### Sweet Home Concerned Citizens

*Pam Hewitt, Wendy Cramer, Bryan Vernon, Norina Columbaro, Megan Berger, Bill Berger and others*

## PUBLIC SAFETY

From page 3

away. Owner did not want to pursue charges. Damage over \$2,500.

7:20 p.m. - Caller reported wheelchair left in 1100 block 35th Ave.

7:45 p.m. - Male warned for illegal camping in 47200 block Quartzville Rd.

8:01 p.m. - Caller reported kids were shooting a bow and arrow in 2000 block 18th Ave. and one of the arrows landed in caller's yard. Officer responded, counseled juveniles, contacted guardian who will handle discipline.

8:34 p.m. - Robert Edward Hilliard, 55, arrested by LCSO on SHMC warrant for FTC in criminal driving case. Cited to appear Oct. 22.

8:44 p.m. - Caller reported aggressive dog in 500 block Surrey Lane. Officer responded, unable to contain dog. Neighbors advised to

stay inside and alert officer when owner returned.

10:50 p.m. - Shannon Mingo, 52, of Sweet Home, cited for driving uninsured, 1500 block Main St.

12:44 p.m. - Joe Parker, 47, of Sweet Home, cited for failing to carry proof of insurance, Hwy. 20/44th Ave.

### Sept. 19

12:56 a.m. - Caller reported bank gave him too much money, Key Bank, 1199 10th Ave. Officer responded, info noted, caller was advised of options.

4:10 a.m. - Heather Fagan, 34, and Kayla Gambill, 34, both of Lebanon, cited on outstanding warrants, 29200 block Pleasant Valley Rd. Fagan cited to appear Oct. 22 at SHMC for FTC in theft case. Both cited and released. Report taken.

7:44 a.m. - Caller reported students gathering in morning to smoke and vape in area of Long St./18th Ave.

Officer responded, unable to locate students.

9:24 a.m. - Caller reported her neighbor singing "really loudly" in 800 block 18th Ave. Officer responded, contacted neighbor who was quiet upon arrival. Deemed to be mental health-related issues.

11:37 a.m. - Caller reported theft during previous night in 2400 block Main St., but did not want to pursue charges. Asked that alleged offender be trespassed.

2:33 p.m. - Caller reported male and female stole items from Hoy's Hardware, 3041 Main St. Officer responded, report taken for theft III. Loss valued at \$49.98. Caller asked that offenders be trespassed when located.

3:15 p.m. - Hit and run reported in 600 block Elm St. Officer responded, contacted caller and vehicle owner. No damages. Caller did not want

**See Public Safety, Page 6**

# The New Era

A LOCALLY OWNED NEWSPAPER

SWEETHOMENEWS.COM

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MUNICIPAL COURT

**Warrants - Sept. 10**  
Christina Abram, Donlad Ames, Mollie Anglim, Susan Ausbun-Miller, Steven Ballweber, Katherine Berghoffer, Bradley Bowman, Tyler Cain, Aelisha Devine, Brandy Dozier, Leonard Finnell, Becky Foster, Brandon Freeman, Willa Harris, Scott Heinz, Custin Jones, Leslie Maynard, Raul Ramirez, William Phillips, Brent Prather, Sean Robinson, Michael Runyan, Corey Smith, Stephanie Starkweather, Kevin Terwilliger, Gregory Tibbs, Nicholas Warren, Dustin Westling, Aleece Woods.

**Sept. 10**  
**Jill K. Forrest, 34**, guilty by default of dog at large and dog as a nuisance - fine \$1,000.  
**Paul L. Herzberg II, 38**, guilty by default of driving uninsured and driving while suspended or revoked - fine \$3,030, suspended license.  
**Rudy A. Inga Soto, 32**, guilty by default of unlawful use or failure to use lights, driving while suspended or

revoked, and driving uninsured - fine \$4,045, suspended license.  
**Jennifer M. Limerick, 42**, pleaded no contest to speeding 30/20 - fine \$225.  
**Lucas M. Melbye** guilty by default of violation of animals and birds - rooster - fine \$500.  
**Melinda M. Phillips, 60**, guilty of criminal driving while suspended or revoked - fine \$3,301, probation 60 mos.  
**Noah J. Prewitt, 20**, pleaded no contest to minor in possession of alcohol - fine \$265.  
**James E. Tagen, 51**, guilty by default of driving while suspended or revoked - fine \$2,015, suspended license.  
**David J. Wall, 30**, guilty of theft II - fine \$1,596, probation 36 mos., work crew 10 days, no contact orders.  
**Aug. 27**  
**Michael D. Brown, 49**, guilty by default of open storage, public nuisance, and obstructing streets - fine \$7,020.  
**Melissa A. Dewar, 52**, guilty by default of driving while suspended or revoked

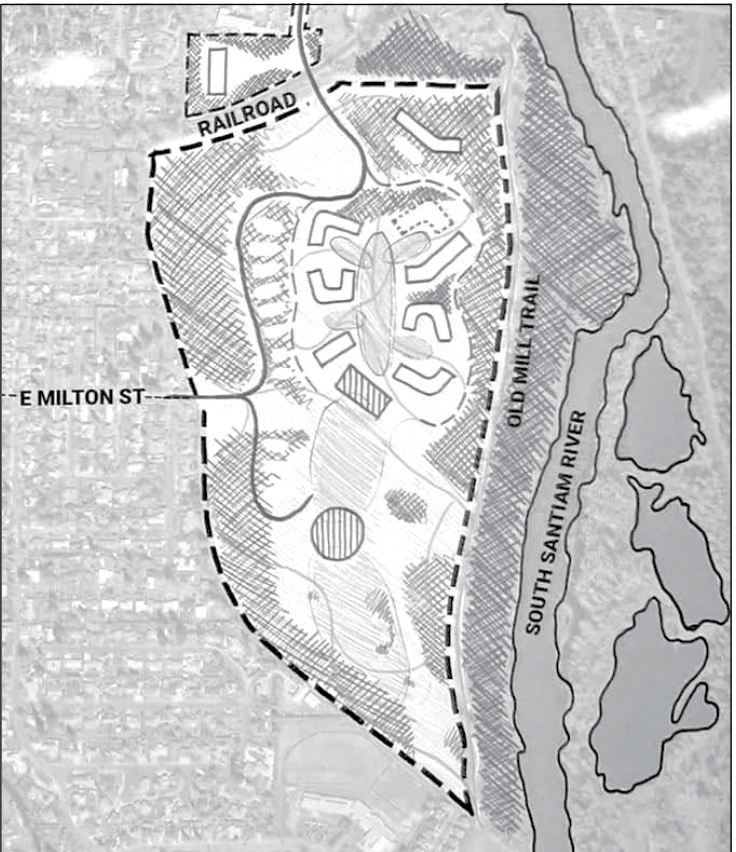
- fine \$2,015, suspended license.  
**Michael D. Ferebee, 46**, guilty by default of driving uninsured, driving while suspended or revoked, and failure to register vehicle - fine \$3,295, suspended license.  
**Rachel L. Gonzalez, 27**, pleaded no contest to operating a vehicle without driving privileges and driving uninsured - fine \$465.  
**Clinton J. Gregg, 33**, pleaded no contest to disorderly conduct II - fine \$366, probation 24 mos., work crew 10 days, no contact orders.  
**Travis T. Gregg, 31**, pleaded no contest to disorderly conduct II - fine \$366, probation 24 mos., work crew 10 days, no contact orders.  
**Hollie L. Gregory, 69**, guilty by default of open storage and nuisance public health - debris or junk property - fine \$30,000.  
**David R. Kirkpatrick** guilty by default of open storage, and weeds, grass and brush control - fine \$31,000.

**Forrest C. Norman, 57**, guilty by default of open storage and public nuisance - fine \$30,500.  
**Kathleen L. Poe, 32**, guilty by default of driving while suspended or revoked - fine \$2,015, suspended license.  
**Rylee J. Watts, 21**, guilty by default of driving uninsured and driving while suspended or revoked - fine \$3,030, suspended license.  
**Aug. 13**  
**Tyler M. Cain, 26**, guilty by default of driving uninsured and driving while suspended or revoked - fine \$3,030, suspended license.  
**Larry A. Langford, 74**, pleaded no contest to driving while suspended or revoked - fine \$1,201, probation 36 mos., work crew 15 days.  
**Jordan T. Nixon, 25**, guilty

by default of careless driving, failure to carry proof of compliance with financial responsibility requirements, and operating a vehicle without driving privileges - fine \$3,045, suspended license.  
**Ryan T. Nugent, 31**, pleaded guilty to reckless driving - fine \$501, probation 36 mos., work crew 15 days, license suspension three mos. DUII charge dismissed.  
**Dalton R. Orr, 29**, guilty by default of unnecessary noise - fine \$500.  
**Davy A. Phillips, 45**, pleaded guilty to offensive littering - fine \$301, probation 60 mos., work crew five days.  
**Nikolas M. Teoli, 22**, guilty of theft III - fine \$310, probation 12 mos., work crew five days, no contact orders.

Comp-NW medical university takes next step toward expansion

Western University of Health Sciences (WesternU) announced it received the deed for 150 acres of land in Lebanon to be used in the university's plan for expansion. The land - bordered by Gill's Landing to the north, Riverview School to the south, and the South Santiam River flowing along the east - was formerly the site of the Santiam and Willamette Industries mills, often referred to in Lebanon as the "old mill" property. The Heatherington Foundation for Innovation and Education in Health Care donated the land for the new campus, while FamilyCare, Inc. donated \$22.5 million toward the expansion. WesternU's College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific Northwest (COMP-Northwest in Lebanon) will be renamed to the Heatherington College of Osteopathic Medicine in honor of Dr. Jeff Heatherington, who is president of both donor organizations. WesternU in Lebanon currently operates COMP-Northwest and the College of Health Sciences-Northwest (CHS-Northwest). The former, Oregon's only osteopathic medical school, confers doctorate degrees in osteopathic medicine, while the latter offers a physical therapy program. The university, which also



**Photo provided by Laura Gillott**  
A design concept shows what the new WesternU campus in Lebanon might look like on the old mill property. operates colleges in California, is developing a master plan for the new land, with plans to establish a graduate program in behavioral health there. The school reported the development will "emphasize the use of Oregon's natural resources, net-zero construction principles, and restoration of the land's nat-

ural habitat," with "abundant greenspaces, art, culture, and state-of-the-art teaching and learning environments." The school's plan includes restoring the area's ecosystem to encourage the return of native flora and fauna. To see its fulfillment, WesternU will launch a comprehensive fundraising campaign.

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## PUBLIC SAFETY

From page 4

to press charges.

3:34 p.m. - Caller reported dogs running loose in 900 block 4th Ave., chasing cats. Officer advised caller of options.

5:23 p.m. - Citizen reported son being harassed by another student at home and at school. Officer responded, contacted both parties. Report taken.

5:43 p.m. - Eve Lorelei, 29, of Brownsville, cited for careless driving following crash in area of Brownsville Rd./Washburn Heights Dr., Brownsville. Report taken.

6:06 p.m. - Deputy assisted park rangers with getting boat unstuck from Sunnyside moorage, 44900 block Quartzville Rd.

6:36 p.m. - Leonard John Finnell arrested on SHMC

warrant for FTC in initiating false report case. Cited and released. Officers had responded to report of fight in 4800 block Main St. Parties involved in combat did not want to pursue charges.

7:12 p.m. - Caller from Sweet Home High School reported vehicle driving through field at location. Officer responded, contacted student, who was warned for driving through field, failure to register vehicle. 1641 Long St.

8:39 p.m. - Dustin Kyle Westling, 38, arrested by Salem police on SHMC warrant for FTC in criminal driving case. Cited to appear Oct. 22.

9:13 p.m. - Caller reported vehicle in middle of road in area of 14th Ave./Kalmia St. Officer responded, located vehicle on which parking brake had failed. Vehicle returned to driveway, secured.

9:59 p.m. - Caller reported daughter, Vanessa Gutierrez, 30, missing. Officer responded, report taken.

11:53 p.m. - Nickolas Ryan Shoulders, 36, arrested by Lebanon police on SHMC warrant for FTC in theft case. Cited to appear Oct. 22.

### Sept. 18

9:30 a.m. - Oscar Cruz Garcia, 36, of Sweet Home, cited for speeding, 53/35, 900 block Main St., Brownsville.

9:53 a.m. - KC Everett Merl Holt, 42, arrested by Albany police on SHMC warrant for FTC in theft case. Cited to appear Oct. 22.

10:05 a.m. - Samantha Merilee Solesbee, 28, of Halsey, cited for speeding, 73/55, 28800 block Hwy. 99, Halsey.

12:22 p.m. - Caller from Sweet Home High School reported stolen band instrument, 1641 block Long St.

Officer responded. Missing instrument described as Yamaha oboe valued at \$2,500. Investigation continuing.

1:22 p.m. - Caller from Sweet Home Chamber of Commerce, 1575 Main St., reported someone had left lawn mower and chair at location. Items placed in police property.

3:25 p.m. - Caller reported fraud; unknown person had opened bank account in her name, 29400 block Speas Rd. Report taken.

4:38 p.m. - Caller reported juveniles riding motorcycles on sidewalk and in roadway in area of 48th Loop. Officer responded, contacted one of the juveniles, who was counseled on safe motorcycle operation.

5:01 p.m. - Death investigation conducted in 26800 block Rowell Hill Rd. Death determined to be natural. Report taken.

7:44 p.m. - Travis Hemphill, 55, of Eugene, cited for failing to carry proof of insurance, 24900 block Hwy. 99, Halsey.

9:35 p.m. - Chain and two padlocks reported stolen from 50500 block Hwy. 20, Cascadia. Value estimated at \$50. Report taken.

### Sept. 17

2:21 a.m. - Multiple callers reported female screaming for help in 2200 block Nandina St. Officer responded, located parties who separated and agreed to remain so. Possible menacing case referred to District Attorney's Office for review.

7:23 a.m. - Caller reported individuals sleeping on football field at Husky Field, 22nd Ave.

2:57 p.m. - Caller reported two juvenile males operating golf cart on South Hills Trail, off Elm St. Officer contacted, counseled juveniles and parent.

5:05 p.m. - Deputy investigated illegal camp on Cascade Timber Consulting property in area of Sunnyside Rd./North River Dr. Report taken.

6:01 p.m. - Stephen Scant-

See Public Safety, Page 9

# CHURCH

## DIRECTORY

For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.

-Matthew 18:20



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10:30 a.m. Children's Church



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11:00 am Worship  
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## Local U.S. Forest Service fire restriction levels reduced

Due to recent rainfall and cooler temperatures, the Willamette National Forest reduced public use restrictions over much of the forest on Saturday, Sept. 20.

Fire danger lowered to "moderate" and Industrial Fire Precaution Level (IFPL) is now at Level 1 on the Willamette National Forest.

Fire restrictions remain in place on all lands within the forest, excluding the Three Sisters, Mt. Jefferson, Mt. Washington, Waldo Lake, and Diamond Peak Wilderness areas. Even with the reduced fire risk, it is still important to never leave a campfire unattended and completely extinguish it, so it is cold to the touch.

All campfires, charcoal or briquette fires, pellet fires, or any other open fires remain prohibited outside of campfire rings established by the Forest Service in designated campgrounds under a Forest Order. Portable cooking stoves and lanterns using

liquefied or bottled fuel are still allowed as they can be instantly switched off.

Restrictions remain in effect for chainsaws in campgrounds, smoking, and off-highway vehicles. Smoking is not allowed except within an enclosed vehicle or building or a developed recreation site. Additionally, welding, or operating an acetylene or other torch with open flame is also not allowed.

Generators are permitted only in areas devoid of vegetation, such as a paved area or developed campsite. Motorized vehicles may operate only on designated trails and roads, including in Huckleberry Flats and Santiam OHV area.

Additional fire information is available on the Willamette National Forest website at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/r06/willamette/fire>.

To report a wildfire, call 9-1-1.



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# Huskies show physical side in win over Woodburn

By Scott Swanson  
Of The New Era

Sweet Home's football players showed grit in a 26-13 win over a stubborn Woodburn team Friday night, Sept. 19.

It was smash-mouth pretty much from the opening kick-off as the Bulldogs, who exited with an 0-3 record, clearly were hoping to turn that around.

"I knew Woodburn was going to come out ready to play," Head Coach Ryan Adams said. "Woodburn came in and punched us in the mouth and made it a good football game. They've got some big boys up there."

It took a while for Sweet Home to get rolling. The Huskies were forced to punt after a short possession to open the game and the snap went over punter Bode Nichols' head, giving Woodburn the ball on the Sweet Home 7 yard line.

But Sweet Home's defense picked up where it left off the week before, putting up a suffocating containment to keep the visitors out of the end zone for three plays and kicker Ale Mendez gave them a 3-0 lead with a 5-yard field goal.

Sweet Home then launched an 11-play drive that ended with quarterback Kyle Zajic hitting Trenton Templin with



Photo by Scott Swanson

Quarterback Kyle Zajic weaves through defenders on one of the Huskies' drives in their win over Woodburn.

an 18-yard pass to put the Huskies ahead 6-0 with two minutes on the clocks. Woodburn blocked the point-after attempt to leave the score there going into the second quarter.

Sweet Home's defense held the Bulldogs to three plays and the Huskies got the ball back

and pushed to the Woodburn 23 when a bad snap on fourth down sailed over Zajic's head and the visitors took over at their 34 and put on their longest drive of the night, to the Sweet Home 1, where the defense stopped them, thanks in part to a holding penalty that

set Woodburn back to the 13, where Mendez drilled his second three-pointer of the night to even the score.

The Huskies responded with another drive mixing passes and slashing runs, to march 75 yards in eight plays, capped by a 10-yard run by Sam Bar-

ringer for their second touchdown of the night with 35 seconds on the clock. Keeghan Gittins was able to get the kick off this time and Sweet Home took a 13-6 lead into the locker room.

But the biggest play of the drive came two plays earlier when Zajic, under pressure and scrambling to the Bulldogs' sideline, launched a desperation throw down the sideline that was pulled in by Brayden McClure at the 10 for a 29-yard completion.

McClure said he could see that Zajic wasn't finding any open receivers on the play side as he ran down the sideline.

"I just ran that backside route and I was looking at my quarterback and he was covered up. He saw me and it ended up coming to me and I had to make the play," he said.

Woodburn went to a ball-control game for most of the second half in which Sweet Home had the ball three times, scoring twice.

In the third quarter, Woodburn scored a touchdown when Brady Shaw bulled into the end zone from the 1, and Mendez kicked the point after to even the score.

See Football, Page 12

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# Habitat for Humanity ushers 31st family into new home

**By Sarah Brown**  
*Of The New Era*

It took three long years, but the wait is finally paying off for the McMahon family as they move from a rental into their first, brand new house in Sodaville.

As Habitat for Humanity Executive Director Tina Breshears put it, "What begins as a vision soon becomes a place of safety and hope."

The McMahons are the most recent family to move into their own home through Lebanon Area Habitat for Humanity. It's the organization's 31st homing project since the nonprofit incorporated in 1993.

Ted and Veronica McMahon had been sharing a two-bedroom house in Sweet Home for seven years with their sons, Jordan, 17, and Sam, 8. While Jordan mainly lives with his grandmother, he had to share Sam's room when he stayed with his parents.

"It was hard 'cause I got a teenager and then one that's in elementary school; it's not easy," Veronica said.

Sam, who looks up to his brother, didn't mind sharing the room with Jordan, Veronica said, but Jordan admitted sometimes it could be annoying to not have his own space.

Today, the boys find themselves moving into their own, private rooms in the three-bedroom, two-bath house.

What the family is leaving behind is a house which, according to the parents, had issues their landlord wouldn't fix: siding falling



From left, Veronica, Jordan, Ted and Sam McMahon cut the ribbon on their new house while Kelsey Breshears, at right, watches.

off, lead paint, broken gutters, windows that wouldn't open, a broken porch, and rats.

It's the sort of conditions Habitat for Humanity takes seriously when finding their next family to accept into the program. Candidates must be able to demonstrate a need for housing, including the need for a safe and healthy environment, Breshears told potential sponsors in 2019. Other considerations include people faced with "astronomical" rent or homelessness.

Candidates must also qualify as "low income," or be between 30 and 59 percent of the area median income. Habitat homes are sold with no interest and at no profit, but buyers must complete classes and invest a number of "sweat equity" volunteer hours before they

get the keys to their home.

Buyers also, despite a low income, must be able to pay a small mortgage, including taxes and insurance. Ideally that would be no more than 43 percent of their income, Breshears said.

One important caveat to Habitat's ability to provide these homes, however, is the organization's reliance on donations of land and/or houses.

"I love it. I'm excited," Veronica said about her first impression in the front yard of her new home. "I can't wait to see the rest of it."

On Sept. 13, Jordan and Sam were given the honor to cut the red ribbon during a special home dedication ceremony. Then Kelsey Breshears, Habitat construction team member, handed the keys over to Veronica and Ted.

"This house is really nice looking," Jordan said. "I thought it was really cool when they started building it. I've been wanting to see it finished. It looks beautiful, actually."

The 1,540 square foot house sits on the top of a hillside. Its facade boasts a deep blue color with white trim. Inside, vaulted ceilings rise over a wood floor. The kitchen features black marble countertops and black tile backsplash. The paint, flooring, cabinets and countertops are among the decisions the McMahons were allowed to make regarding their new home.

The family's faces gleamed as they saw their completed home for the first time. Veronica looked at the spacious pantry, noting they would now have room for all their food. Ted commented

on having a separate laundry room, and then the two headed toward the bedrooms.

Sam darted ahead, taking in the new rooms much quicker than his older counterparts. As the parents spent time admiring the hall bathroom features, Sam looked at his room and then darted into the master bedroom.

His parents' room overlooks the backyard with a sloping lawn and, beyond the property line, nothing but a prairie-like easement and wall of trees as their view.

In the master bedroom, Veronica entered her walk-in closet and spun around several times with her arms outstretched.

While the McMahons had seen the property multiple times during the beginning of the build, they were barred from visiting since December, allowing room for something of a "final reveal."

The road to get to this day, however, has been a long and bumpy one.

According to Tina Breshears, the organization received a land donation in Sodaville that included an old store building near City Hall. The city, not wanting to lose the historic value of the store, offered to trade the property for two vacant lots.

One of the lots, located next to the water tower on Ridge Street, became the site for what would be the McMahon home. They broke ground in October 2022

**See New Home, Page 15**

## The *Icebox* Performer Of The Week



This week's ICEBOX Performer of the Week goes to Zach!

Our bolt-together units can be absolute beasts to handle, but Zach has been taking on the challenge with skill, determination, and a great attitude. His commitment and adaptability have stood out as we continue refining and perfecting the process behind these unique builds.

Thank you, Zach, for the hard work and dedication you bring to the team. We appreciate everything you do!



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# Burning to Learn at Old Mill Property

Oregon Department of Forestry firefighters, above, burn tall grass on the Old Mill Property north of 24th Avenue Wednesday, Sept. 17. At right, Sweet Home wildland fire crew member Ian Gonzalez loads a rogue hoe tool onto teammate Dalton Keifer's back as they prepare for the training exercise, which included some 40 firefighters from ODF and Sweet Home Fire and Ambulance District. Sweet Home wildland crew chief Christian Whitfield said they were able to conduct multiple exercises in fire suppression and controlling fuel reduction burns as they burned close to 11 acres of grass. See more photos at [sweethomenews.com](http://sweethomenews.com).

Photos by Scott Swanson



## PUBLIC SAFETY

From page 6

lin, 52, of Lebanon, arrested on warrants after deputy located suspicious vehicles parked in front of and blocking private timber gate in 43700 block North River Dr. Report taken.

7:53 p.m. - Joseph Gene Salley, 55, arrested on LMC warrant for FTA in criminal citation, Husky Field, 22nd Ave. Cited and released.

8:39 p.m. - Becky Marie Foster, 52, arrested on SHMC warrant for FTC in criminal misconduct case, 2100 block Main St.

9:12 p.m. - Noah James Prewitt, 20, arrested for criminal driving, driving uninsured, after caller reported that Mazda MZ3 had crashed through his fence in 1900 block 12th Ave. Vehicle towed.

### Sept. 16

12:28 a.m. - Caller reported male walking in middle of Main St. in area of 15th Ave. Officer responded, contacted male, who was advised to stay on sidewalk.

3:14 a.m. - Michael Scott Delay, 37, arrested on LMC warrant for FTA in criminal citation after officer located male and female sleeping in vehicle in area of Long St./12th Ave. They were

warned for car sleeping. Delay cited and released.

10:44 a.m. - Karlee Eddie, 36, of Sweet Home, cited for speeding, 78/55, Main St./Pleasant Valley Rd.

12:15 p.m. - Caller reported someone had entered and started her vehicle during previous night, 1000 block 14th Ave. Officer responded, report taken for unauthorized entry into motor vehicle.

12:51 p.m. - Leslie Renee Maynard, 52, arrested by Albany police on SHMC warrant for FTC in harassment case. Cited to appear Oct. 22.

1:34 p.m. - Brandon Ryan Freeman, 31, arrested by Lebanon police on SHMC warrant for FTC in trespassing case. Cited to appear Oct. 22.

1:42 p.m. - Brandon Lee Caswell, 31, arrested for luring a minor, 6000 block Main St. Lodged at Linn County Jail.

2:41 p.m. - Caller reported dog in hot car with windows rolled up, 1200 block Main St. Officer responded, contacted registered owner of vehicle, who removed dog. Owner counseled on actions.

To see more Public Safety reports and updates, visit [sweethomenews.com](http://sweethomenews.com).

# Instrument Drive

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# SH girls notch first soccer victory in over two years

By Ryker Burr  
For The New Era  
707 days.

That's how long ago it was since Sweet Home's girls soccer team last won a game.

The Huskies were on a 21-game losing streak, dating back to Oct. 10, 2023.

But everything changed on Tuesday, when Sweet Home finally emerged victorious, shutting out Gervais/Kennedy, 2-0.

It's obvious that this feat meant more than your average win.

After his first victory in over two years, a beaming Head Coach Ramiro Santana said, "Getting a win for this group of girls is a great thing because they can start to believe in themselves, and that winning is possible by working hard in practice. It pays off. This is a very young team, so I hope this win creates a positive energy that will lead to more wins."

Reece Parker-Lindner scored the Huskies' first goal,

early in the first half, and Annabelle Morris delivered the second.

Team Captain and Goalkeeper Lyndie Birkett stated: "Honestly, this is a breath of fresh air. It feels amazing to win a game so early on in the season. I think this sets a good tone for the rest of the season."

In the summer Santana said he wanted his team to "never give up" and he said they have persevered.

"The team played amazing, we communicated very well and we were aggressive to get the ball during the whole game. It was amazing, winning a game because last year we didn't win a single game. We are going to work hard and practice hard to win more than one this season."

The Huskies will look to continue their success at home against Junction City, 6 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 23. The Tigers were 0-6 coming into this week and ranked two spots lower (27th) than Sweet Home in the state 4A rankings.



Reece Parker-Lindner celebrates after scoring Sweet Home's first goal in the Huskies' win against Kennedy. Photos by Scott Swanson



Kennedy defenders attempt to clear the ball as Reece Parker-Lindner looks for an opportunity. See more game photos at [sweethomenews.com](http://sweethomenews.com).



Annabelle Morris battles for possession with Kennedy's Megan Wagner.

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# Sweet Home volleyball has mixed results in tough road schedule

By Keeghan Gittins  
For The New Era

The Sweet Home volleyball team faced a challenging stretch last week, taking on top-ranked opponents in No. 4 Estacada and No. 2 Cottage Grove, and losing both matches 3-0.

Saturday, the Huskies traveled to the Marist Invitational, where they lost a match to the No. 1 Spartans and suffered a narrow 2-1 loss to 3A No. 11 Pleasant Hill.

Sweet Home's two wins in the tournament came over Klamath Union and Springfield.

Despite suffering some tough losses, to even tougher competition, all on the road, the Huskies headed into league play this week with a 7-5 overall record and the No. 11 ranking in 4A.

## Estacada 3, Sweet Home 0

On Sept. 16, the Huskies traveled to Estacada,

ranked fourth in the 4A polls. Sweet Home started the night slowly, dropping the first set 25-13. However, they came to life in the next two sets, narrowly falling 27-25 and 25-23.

"Defensively, we struggled in a few areas – serve receive, tip coverage, and hit coverage all broke down at times," Coach Dargis explained. "We let too many balls drop and weren't always ready for their setter dumping the ball, which put us out of position."

Offensively, Sweet Home was aggressive, but good rotations from the Rangers made it difficult for the Huskies to score.

"We took a lot of swings on the night, but our attack didn't have the impact we wanted in terms of putting the ball away, even though the ball was spread around well, we just didn't get enough kills to do real damage to their defense," said Dargis.

Sweet Home has much improved from the service line since the beginning of the season.

"Serving was a huge positive, we only had five errors in three games," said Dargis. Karissa "KJ" Jewell and Miley Smith were both perfect from the white line, Smith going 7/7 and Jewell finishing 17/17.

"That was great to see," said Dargis.

Sweet Home's trio of Aubrey Newberry, Keira Johnson, and Kaitlyn Kennedy all finished with six kills on the night.

Johnson led the Huskies with four blocks, while Trinity Victor led the team with 15 assists.

"Our setter did a good job spreading the ball around," said Dargis.

"Miley Smith was outstanding in serve receive, giving us a lot of perfect and good passes to the setter."

## Cottage Grove 3, SH 0

Just two days later, Sweet Home took on an even tougher opponent in No. 2 Cottage Grove on Sept. 18. The Lions, featuring three players standing 6 feet tall, posed a major matchup issue for the Huskies, whose tallest player stands around 5-8 – four other Cottage Grove players are that height.

Sweet Home struggled to get around the Lion's blockers, but improved as the match progressed, eventually falling, 25-9, 25-14, and 25-16.

## Marist Invitational

The Huskies were in Eugene Saturday to play in the Marist Invitational, splitting the weekend going 2-2.

Sweet Home opened strong, beating Klamath Union in two sets, 25-21 and 25-16. Their second match was a close loss to Pleasant Hill, 25-22 and 25-23.

Sweet Home then faced No. 1-ranked Marist. The

Spartans, who also are tall – with eight players ranging from 5-8 to 6-1, made quick work of the Huskies, 25-16, and 25-9. However Sweet Home was able to leave the tournament with another win, beating Springfield. Scores for that final match were not available.

Looking forward, Sweet Home will face yet another tough road challenge against No. 3 Philomath, another team known for its height and athleticism. The Huskies will then finally return home on Thursday, Sept. 25, to take on No. 22 Newport at 6 p.m.

Dargis said her team is profiting from the challenging road schedule.

"We've had a tough schedule, and our girls are learning and improving each time out," she said.

"These matches are making us better and preparing us for what's ahead in league play."

# IDENTIFIED

From page 1

the examination were undetermined due to the limited number of elements recovered, OSP said. The dental examination noted several restorations.

In 2010, the Oregon Museum of Natural and Cultural History completed an anthropology report. A biological profile provided a probable estimation of a white female under 35 years of age at the time of her death. However, she remained unidentified.

Later that year, a bone sample was submitted to the University of North Texas Center for Human Identification, and a National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs) profile was created.

From 2011 through 2025, the case received consistent attention from the State Medical Examiner's Office. DNA results were uploaded to the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS); however, no genetic associations were discovered.

OSP said the NamUs system was "regularly checked" for new cases that might match the decedent. While the DNA results confirmed the remains were female, no ancestry or phenotype could be determined due to the limitations of the STR DNA (short segments of DNA) profile.

In 2011, a forensic artist with the Clackamas County

Sheriff's Office assisted in creating a potential forensic rendering of the decedent's face based on cranial features. A clay model featuring several different hairstyles and colors was created to help establish a recognizable image.

By 2020, the Oregon State Medical Examiner's Office had been awarded a National Institute of Justice grant to perform advanced DNA techniques on unsolved unidentified skeletal remains cases.

This case was recognized as one that could potentially be resolved through DNA phenotyping and investigative genetic genealogy, provided by OSP's vendor lab, Parabon NanoLabs. An additional bone sample was submitted for DNA extraction, and in November 2020, a SNP DNA (a unique genetic marker) profile was successfully produced and analyzed.

A Parabon NanoLabs DNA Snapshot Report, which utilizes genetic material to determine eye color, hair color, skin tone, and ancestry, was completed.

The report predicted the individual was of European and Indigenous North American descent, with unfreckled fair skin, brown eyes, and brown hair.

A rendering of her facial characteristics was created and used as her NamUs profile picture. A subsequent genetic genealogy report was completed in 2023, but

did not produce any promising leads.

A breakthrough in the case occurred in April 2025, when someone spontaneously uploaded their genetic profile to the Family Tree DNA database, providing genealogists with a much closer look into the unidentified woman's family tree.

Forensic scientists followed genetic and other leads and ultimately determined that McWhorter was likely the unidentified young woman.

Genealogists found that McWhorter had one surviv-

ing family member, a younger sister living in the Seattle area. A Linn County Sheriff's Office detective contacted the sister, who provided an oral swab for DNA comparison and shared the story of her long-lost older sister.

Genetic evidence confirmed that the decedent was Marion Vinetta Nagle McWhorter, born on Jan. 7, 1953, and who had been unaccounted for since 1974. Based on the totality of the evidence, Oregon Chief Medical Examiner Dr. Sean Hurst positively identified the remains and confirmed

the findings with McWhorter's remaining family.

The Linn County Sheriff's Office is aware of the case and is working to determine, if possible, the circumstances of Marion McWhorter's death.

"Discovering Marion McWhorter's identity was a remarkable collaboration among detectives, medical examiner staff, and forensic genetic genealogists at Parabon NanoLabs," the OSP said.

**Note: OregonLive posted an extensive story on the case on Sept. 19.**



# Cheffrey donation to SHFAD

Jeff Gainer, center left, owner of Cheffry's Gourmet Grub, presents a donation check to members of the Sweet Home Fire and Ambulance District staff from proceeds during the National Night Out event on Aug. 19. The \$1,307 gift will go to the department's Volunteer Association, said Ryan Paul, center right, recruitment and retention coordinator for the district.



# Fire chief: Hoping for rain soon, but response system's working well

By Scott Swanson  
Of The New Era

Fire Chief Nick Tyler told members of the Sweet Home Fire and Ambulance District Board of Directors that he is hoping for "pretty substantial rain" that had been forecasted prior to their monthly meeting on Tuesday, Sept. 16.

"It looks like some big rains are coming to the Northwest, which hopefully will be a fire season-ending event," he said, adding, semi-jokingly, that he was "looking at the European Model" forecast.

Tyler reported that local fire crews have been all over the state in recent weeks, working at various wildfires, and that some lightning-sparked local fires, mostly on U.S. Forest Service land east of Sweet Home, gave him a chance to test out an agreement made earlier this year with ODF that allows local firefighters to be recalled if deemed necessary.

Tyler said he contacted the ODF fire manager at the Marks Creek Fire in Prineville, to which Sweet Home firefighters had been dispatched right before the lightning strikes.

At about 6 p.m., Tyler said, he reached the fire manager and said, "I would like to recall

our crew and get them back into the district."

By 10 p.m. the local firefighters knew they were being demobilized in the morning to return to Sweet Home.

"It went perfect, the way that I was hoping it would be."

He said firefighters got to work on a fire on the Middle Fork of the Santiam River and were able to keep that to a quarter acre, "which is around a lot of private timber companies."

"So it was a really good thing to have for Sweet Home Fire and be able to do and be part of that."

Tyler also reported that a settlement hearing had been scheduled for Wednesday, Sept. 17, in a federal lawsuit filed against the district by former employee Zach Lincoln, in which two claims were still active as of Tuesday.

Battalion Chief Josh Bondesen reported that work on the seismic project at Station 23 on 47th Avenue was scheduled to start Sept. 22.

He said that work on the ladder truck damaged at the July 4 fireworks show is a little behind schedule, but that the ladder is being welded and will then be painted.

"We're still looking at mid-October before we get that back," he said.

Also, he said, the district's surplus medic unit has been auctioned off for \$2,613 to a company in Michigan, which was the higher of two bidders.

Bondesen also reported that the district is looking at buying an ice machine.

He said Hoys owner Greg Mahler is donating "probably 60 to 65% of the cost of the machine."

He added that having ice readily available will "be really nice for the crews going up the hill and people responding to fires."

He said the machine will produce somewhere in the range of 450 pounds of ice a day, "and then the bin will hold up to 520 (pounds), "so it'll hold a lot of ice. We shouldn't be short of ice."

Tyler said that he likes having ice on each fire apparatus and ambulance unit.

"When I was working on the ambulance we had an ice chest on the ambulance for water too. It was always nice to keep a couple of IV bags in there, in case you had an overheated patient and stuff like that."



Photo by Scott Swanson  
Daniel McCubbins and other Huskies bring down Woodburn's Victor Rivero. See more photos at [sweethomenews.com](http://sweethomenews.com).

## FOOTBALL

From page 7

With 4:30 on the clock in the third quarter, Dillan Davis scored on a 10-yard sweep, and Gittins delivered another point after to give the Huskies the lead again, 20-13.

Their final score came with 2:30 on the clock in the fourth, when Luke Rosa scored on a 1-yard run to cap a nine-play, 47-yard drive, with Gittins adding the PAT.

Down by two touchdowns with two minutes to go, Woodburn marched down the field with a mixture of passes and runs that elicited five first

downs, moving 69 yards before senior linebacker Alex Bachand put a stop to the Bulldogs' momentum by sacking Woodburn quarterback Mason Pickett. A final field goal attempt by Mendez missed.

"I was just trying to keep my head," Bachand said. "They were driving down the field. I was like, 'it's the next play' - next play mentality."

"I saw him roll out, and I just needed to go make my play. Our coaches teach us to roll outside linebacker, just to fire, attack straight away."

Sweet Home finished with 145 yards on the ground, with

See Football, Page 15

# Deaths nearly double births in county in August, commissioners learn

By Alex Paul

Linn County Communications

There were 105 deaths and 61 births in Linn County in August, Health Officer Dr. Adam Brady reported at the Sept. 16 meeting of the Linn County Board of Commis-

sioners.

Dr. Brady said 59 males and 46 females died in August. Three were individuals who were more than 100 years old.

Tobacco use was associated with 23 deaths, diabetes was

associated with 14 deaths and alcohol use was associated with five deaths.

There were 33 boys and 28 girls born in August.

There were 30 reported animal bites and 244 total so far this calendar year.

Dr. Brady said there was one new case of HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) and eight total for the calendar year to date.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Approved a resolution

and order to purchase a rock quarry on Brock Drive, off Stayton Scio Road, for \$120,000 from Mary J. Brock, trustee of the Mary J. Brock Revocable Living Trust, David W. Brock and Francis E. Brock. Roadmaster Amy Ramsdell said the property transaction is set to close on Sept. 25.

- Approved an Intergovernmental Agreement with the Oregon Health Authority not-to-exceed \$133,000 for funding of the Parent-Child Interaction Therapy Program for the 2025-2027 biennium. The program teaches parents how to interact in positive ways and set boundaries with their young children who have behavioral issues.

- Approved a Temporary Employment Agreement with Linn County Sheriff's Office Corrections Deputy Alan Campbell, who will retire on Oct. 31. The agreement will allow Campbell to continue working full time under contract through Dec. 31, 2025.

- Approved a First-Time Youth Wage Grant Agreement with Newman-Lebanon-Stayton-Schmizza Public House.



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NOTICE OF ONLINE AUCTION

A SQUARED STORAGE 1294 44th Ave. Sweet Home, OR 97386 Online bidding at [www.storageauctions.com](http://www.storageauctions.com), auction ends 10/9//2025 at 9:00 a.m. Stacy Aguilera, Unit 105 – Christina Harderson, Unit 501 & 502. (Sept 24 - Oct 1)

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(Sept 24)

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(Sept 24 - Oct 8)

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(Sept 24)

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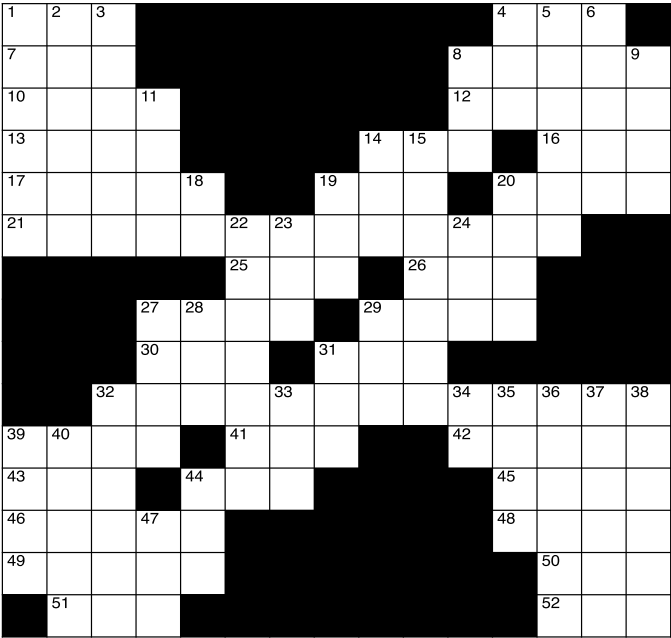
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CLUES ACROSS

1. "Be back later"

4. Zhou dynasty state

7. Mineral

8. \_\_\_ and gagged

10. One of Lebron's former sidekicks

12. Ivory Coast village

13. Caffeinated beverage

14. Without armies

16. Intention

17. Sulfuric and citric are two

19. Supplement with difficulty

20. & & &

21. George and Weezie

25. Liquefied petroleum gas

26. Immortal act

27. Ancient Greek sophist
29. Aids digestion

30. Comedy routine

31. Actress Thurman

32. Adult beverage

39. Amounts of time

41. An awkward stupid person

42. \_\_\_ Walker, "The Color Purple"

43. Covers babies' chests

44. Parts per billion (abbr.)

45. Ottoman military title

46. More skilled

48. Natives to New Mexico

49. Indigent

50. Illuminated

51. Very fast airplane

52. Devoid of cordiality

CLUES DOWN

1. Comedian Goldthwait

2. Worn by women

3. "Naked Gun" actor Nielsen

4. Processes fatty acids

5. Mortals

6. Not invited

8. Show \_\_: entertainment

9. Darkens

11. Pilgrimage

14. Danish krone

15. Savior

18. Midway between south and east

19. Electroencephalograph

20. Henry's wife Boleyn

22. Hairstyle

23. Frames per second
24. Sinclair novel

27. Basics

28. A person's life story

29. Luxury automaker

31. Ultrahigh frequency

32. Island and antelope are two

33. Taxi

34. Farm state

35. Fence part

36. Rwandan capital

37. Onomatopoeic

38. In a state of turbulence

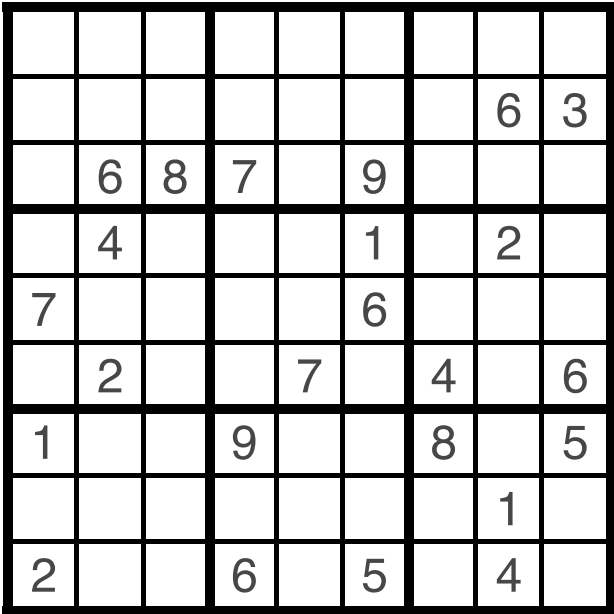
39. Abba \_\_, Israeli politician

40. Flowering plants

44. Inquire too closely

47. Sun up in New York

SUDOKU



Level: Advanced



# New arcade in Lebanon aims to rekindle 'kinesthetic' fun

By Sarah Brown  
Of The New Era

They had thought about the idea before, but when faced with the annual challenge of how to celebrate their son's birthday, Mitch and Nicole Robison realized it was time to add a bonus round to what Lebanon had to offer.

Within months, the Robisons – with the help of their co-player children – opened Afterglow Arcade, Lebanon's newest play space located downtown.

It was their son Ori's 13th birthday last April that set the pinball in motion, so to speak. The family had to decide how they wanted to celebrate. Nicole said in past years they'd already done "all the things," with Lebanon's bowling alley being their go-to for several years.

"We love the bowling alley, but we wanted something different and there wasn't really a space here to do that," Mitch said.

They opted this year to go to an arcade in Albany, but the distance made it difficult for many of Ori's friends to attend. Recalling they'd talked about opening an arcade before, and looking around at

the venue in Albany, Nicole realized the dream was attainable. The pair decided to just "buckle down" and do it.

"So we launched a business plan and we just started ripping," Mitch said.

The energy at Afterglow Arcade comes alive with bright lights and the iconic sound of beeps, dings, machines being manipulated and – for the lucky ones – electric fanfare for jackpot winners.

In one corner, a brightly-lit glass counter displays prizes that can be earned with paper tickets. It's one of the arcade's signature highlights, harkening back to the original days of video game rooms when quarters were placed in coin slots and tickets spit out for points earned.

Instead of modern game cards arcades use today, the Robisons issue out custom tokens to their customers and use paper tickets for prizes.

According to Mitch, the couple wanted people to be able to tap into the kinesthetic response one gets when they put coins into the machine and feel tickets in their hands.

"When we touch it, when we feel it, it makes us feel good," he said. "When you pick up all those tokens, when you hear the tokens hit the bottom, it sounds nice. And when you hit the jackpot, you get to see all those tickets pour out and then you get to pick 'em up and hold 'em and feel 'em."

It's that physical and stimulating sensation they wanted their customers to have, something that can't be experienced with player cards, Nicole said.

"When a kid hits the jackpot and it goes to a player's card, you don't know that you hit a jackpot, you don't know how many tickets you have," she said. "But when those tickets start pouring out and everyone's looking and you're the cool kid, it's a great feeling."

The other thing the Robisons focused on in their business was affordability.

While visiting several ar-



Photo by Sarah Brown  
Amara and Emrey Redick, center, approach an arcade game while Henry, left, and Amanda Redick, right, keep themselves entertained at the Afterglow Arcade.

cadés in the state, they found the reloadable game cards usually cost money to obtain and required a minimum amount of, like, \$10 put on them, Mitch said.

"We didn't want that," he said. "We wanted a kid to come in and have five bucks and throw five bucks in and have fun, right? We just really want to make it accessible to this community."

Plus, he found that using the game cards made the experience less fun in a different way, as well.

"The ones that were not affordable just weren't fun because it had me thinking about money, not thinking about fun," Mitch said.

On Aug. 29, Afterglow Arcade and Contender Comics partnered together to host their first Santiam Comic-Con. Kids and adults, some in costume, flitted from machine to machine and perused comic books.

Mitch and his 4-year-old daughter Olivia, who was dressed in a Batman costume, played some games together, seeming to just enjoy the business they were building together. Olivia, you see, plays a vital role in the business as the company's game tester.

Closer to the front were Nicole, also dressed as Batman, and son Ori. They were busy selling tokens and handing out prizes.

Ori, 13, helps by making

prizes with his 3-D printer and manning the prize table. One of his favorite games at Afterglow is Big Shot, a catapult-type game.

And what does Olivia think about her family owning an arcade?

"It's actually the best," she said.

But she doesn't get to just play all the games she wants; her family lets her earn tokens by doing chores.

The arcade still has plenty of room for growth. In the back storage area, the Robisons have a number of games ready to be fixed up and set out for play. It's an area they think could eventually make a nice event rental space. There's also a smaller room set aside as a party room.

The family has plans to expand with a snack shack and bar, but for now, for the adults who just want to sit and relax while their kids play, there's a row of tables and chairs set along the building's wall of windows.

It's a simple option for parents, but one Brittney Dewberry appreciates. On their first day at the arcade, Brittney and her husband, Ross, showed their young daughter, Finley, how to play some of the games.

"It's great for her because there's not a lot in town for littles," Brittney said. "She loves the tickets, she loves the coins, and she doesn't know yet she gets the prizes

at the end."

Plus, she noted, it's not very expensive.

During the comic-con event, Haley Downs watched as her son, Ryder, played with a driving game, one that was clearly too big for him, but he seemed to be happy just playing with the steering wheel. Meanwhile, Haley's hands grasped a row of paper tickets longer than her. The coins and tickets, she said, were making the experience more fun.

Also, she noted, "It's pretty neat to have something for the kids to do in town versus having to drive hours away."

That was another part of their business plan that was important to the Robisons: location.

"So it could be something families could walk to, kids could walk to, have somewhere for families to go after school, during summer, when it's raining," Nicole said.

And when they leave, she doesn't want them to leave empty handed.

Some people, Nicole explained, are saving up their ticket wins to later redeem for one of the bigger prizes – perhaps the PS5 or TV. But Nicole tries to encourage them to at least get a sucker, "because it's fun to save, but it's also fun to leave with something in your hand."

Afterglow Arcade has been open only a couple of months, and the rainy, indoor season has yet to reveal the true success of the business, but so far the community's reception has been "fantastic," Mitch said.

"I didn't expect to receive the gratitude that we've been receiving from everyone," he said. "So many people thank us for providing this."

The Robisons are already starting to get to know the regulars, and Nicole said she even had a couple hold a date night at the arcade.

"We're just here to have fun and help families have fun, and we have a lot of people thanking us and being really grateful."

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**Photo by Scott Swanson**  
Bradyn McClure goes high over Woodburn's Julian Arroyo to pull in a long pass to set up a Sweet Home touchdown. See more game photos at [sweethomenews.com](http://sweethomenews.com).

## FOOTBALL

From page 12

Zajic, a junior, adding 84 more through the air on 10 for 13 passing, with one interception on a deep pass to Davis who was outmuscled by the Bulldogs' Shaw in a battle in the air for the ball.

The Huskies cleaned up their act from the previous week, in which they had seven turnovers, with only that one this time.

Woodburn had 141 yards on the ground, but Sweet Home limited Pickett, also a junior, to 44 yards passing on a seven-for-12 performance.

Sweet Home was 5-8 on third down conversions, holding the Bulldogs to 3-11.

The offense had 15 first downs to 14 for Woodburn.

Individual statistics were not available.

"They had to grind out and kind of gut check, you know, what kind of football team we are at halftime, and they responded well," Adams said of his team. "We had three goal line stands with our defense, that forced them into either a turnover or a field goal attempts."

"Twice in the second half we got goal line stops, and so that's a huge testament to our defense. They showed up like we expect them to."

Adams acknowledged that the Huskies needed the kind of challenge that Woodburn brought to town.

"That kind of added some extra incentive to grow, get better, more consistent," he

said. "I thought we did that," noting that the defense got decisive stops on the visitors, forcing two field goals, and the final stop in the final period.

"I was really proud of how we responded in that second half, getting stuff done. That's the thing we're going through right now, just learning how to win consistently."

The Huskies are 3-0, which they were last year after beating Woodburn on the road, and now they get a big test: North Bend on the road.

North Bend is 1-2 after a win at Astoria and losses at Estacada (2-2) and Philomath (2-1). This will be the Bulldogs' first home game after a previous Week Two matchup with Gladstone was canceled.

Last year the Huskies were 3-0 heading into a home game against North Bend, which they lost 20-12.

Adams said that this week's game is "a big one for us."

"We're about to go into our toughest week of the year so far, with North Bend next Friday," he said. "The kids recognize that."

The difference this year is, he said, Sweet Home has "been here before."

"We have some experience being in this situation," he said. "You know, they had to grind out and kind of gut check, you know, what kind of football team we are at halftime, and they responded well. So I'm just really excited to kind of see how they continue to respond on that, going into an even tougher opponent."

## NEW HOME

From page 8

with "lofty goals" to have the home completed by June 2023, Breshears said.

But she didn't anticipate all the snags and additional costs they would hit along the way, propelling the move-in date some three years into the future. Some of those snags included upgrading electric access, supply acquisition, and schedule availability of those donating time and labor.

"When you have people donating their time, you go by their schedule," Breshears said.

Indeed, Habitat for Humanity and the families rely largely on donations of labor, equipment, money and supplies. Breshears – under the telltale signs of a choked-up, grateful recipient – made sure to recognize their benefactors for a house "built from the ground up by the hearts and hands of many."

"We absolutely appreciate everybody that donates their time and materials," she said.

The McMahons invested their own labor into the build, as well. According to Ted, they put in 600 hours of sweat equity to make their home a reality.

"It's been pretty exciting going through most of it," he said about the three-year project. "I knew the process of building homes, but I've never been on this side where I'm actually getting the house, so it's been a journey; pretty stressful."

Ted helped paint, build the roof and walls, and install the concrete driveway, trim and flooring. Veronica also helped and, according to Kelsey Breshears, learned new things and conquered



**Photos by Sarah Brown**  
The McMahons react as they see the inside of their completed home for the first time.



Veronica McMahon spins around in her walk-in closet. Watching from the outside are Justin and (reflected in the mirror) Ted McMahon.

fears in the process.

"She was nervous to do anything," Kelsey said. "Like, she wouldn't pick up a hammer, and now she uses power tools. And she did conquer her fear of getting on a ladder."

Working closely with families, teaching them new skills and being a part of getting them into a place they deserve is what fulfills Kelsey in her job, she said.

Pastor Richard Pruitt of New Beginnings Fellowship church opened and closed the ceremony with a benediction and prayer, while friends and family gathered in a circle to be part of the blessing.

"We are thrilled to help open this new chapter in the McMahons' lives and look forward to more new beginnings with future builds," Breshears said.

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**MEALS on WHEELS**  
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# Not their finest day, but SH harriers 'competed well'

Sweet Home's young cross-country team was a little depleted Saturday, but they still ran well, Coach Dave Martin said.

Competing at the Northwest Classic at Lane Community College in Eugene, the Huskies were missing two of their top boys runners and one of their fastest girls – and there weren't a lot of PR's across the board, despite a competitive field and a reasonably fast course.

"We competed well and we didn't get rewarded with the kind of marks that effort would normally have got," Martin said, adding that he was trying to figure it out. "I was pleased with our efforts and our times were respectable, but something was a little off that day."

The only varsity runner who finished with a personal best was freshman Hudson Ogden for the boys, who ran 20:59.20.

Elijah Rodriguez, also a freshman, ran the fastest time of the day for Sweet Home, finishing 25th in 18:29.29 in the boys field of 152 runners. Evan Knight was 74th (20:20.74), Louis Kistner 89th in 20:56.37, Wes Goff was 108th (21:42.51) and Noah Strawn was 109th in 21:43.54; all are sophomores. Missing were Ryker Burr and Acen Webber, which gave Goff and Strawn a chance to run varsity.

The boys were 14th as a team in a field of 21. Cottage Grove was second, with Phoenix eighth, Marist ninth and Junction City 12th as 4A Division finishers ahead of Sweet Home.

McKenzie Miller was the



Photos by Scott Swanson  
Elijah Rodriguez leads a pack of runners at the Northwest Classic.

girls' top finisher, finishing sixth in a field of 104 in 20:03.53, behind Banks senior Sophie Schoolmeester, who won in 19:12.56, followed by Cottage Grove senior Ella Cardwell, second in 19:30.63, and Schoolmeester's freshman sister Molly, who was fourth in 19:48.37.

Sophomore Emma Whitton was not able to run, but freshman Cassie Spencer finished 38th in 23:04.08, junior Noelle Helfrich 64th in 25:15.32 – a seven-second improvement over the previous week, freshman Marian Helfrich was 79th in 26:20.30, freshman Pyper Hall 87th in 27:35.87 and sophomore Madison Ciullo 88th in 27:36.18.

In the JV boys race, freshman Bentley Uhlry was 92nd in a field of 204 runners in his first-ever cross-country race, in 22:47.12, followed by Ryder Farris in 22:56.87; Sam Strawn in 25:08.36; and Eli Adams in 25:50.98.

In the girls JV race, junior Miu Simmons, also running her first-ever cross-country race, finished in 26:42.95, followed by Delainie Pratt

(28:31.54), McKenzie Ohliser (28:39.27 – a 20-second PR), Lexi Lee (31:41.03, also a PR), Zoie Allison (46:12.48) and Nevaeh Mize (50:56.40), both running their first 5K.

Sweet Home's middle school club runners also competed, running a 3000: Wiley Farris (13:18.31), Walker Farris (13:34.15), Brady Goff (15:13.36) and Zander Davis (22:09.96) for the boys, and Emma Davis (14:54.29) and Violet Steinborn (20:19.60) for the girls.

Up next for the Huskies is their own home meet Saturday, Sept. 27, at Community Chapel, 42250 Ames Creek Road. Racing starts at 10:30 a.m. with middle school girls, middle school boys at 11 a.m., and the four high school races at 45-minute intervals starting at 11:30 a.m.

The course is a true cross-country course with two creek crossings for high-schoolers and some uphill climbs and twisting trails.

"Nobody's going to PR on this course," Martin predicted. "It's a much more challenging course than any so far."



McKenzie Miller runs to sixth place in a very competitive field. See more cross-country photos with this story at [sweethomenews.com](http://sweethomenews.com).

## Boys get first soccer win

Sweet Home's boys secured their first victory of the season Thursday, Sept. 18, downing Kennedy 2-1.

"We got the win, but it wasn't pretty," Coach Eric Stutzer said. "Touch and time of possession were huge issues throughout the game. This led to a lot of booting the ball and some swings and misses. One of those misses on defense cost us a penalty kick when the miss took out one of their players in the box."

However, he added, despite the boot balls and "whiffing," the Huskies were able to get into the attacking third and capitalize on opportunities.

Keeghan Gittins was able to even the score with the hosts late in the first half off a volley.

Then, late in the second half, consistent pressure from Sweet Home forced Kennedy to give up a penal-

ty kick of its own and Felix Lopez delivered a strike to the back of the net to put the Huskies ahead.

"Kyle Petrait and Kace Stevens played particularly well on defense," Stutzer said. "(Sophomore goalie) Ben Ramsey made some great saves, including an exceptional one off a deflection going to the top corner."

"We really got to see some of the athleticism he brings to the keeper position this year."

"It was a win, but it was an ugly win. We definitely have some things we need to address as we move into league play this week."

The Huskies traveled to Junction City Tuesday (0-5 going into this week) before hosting sixth-ranked Philomath, which was 4-0, including a 5-0 preseason win at Junction City, at 6 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 25.



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