



## HOMETOWN HEROES

### Hero Takes Brownsville Values to the Skies

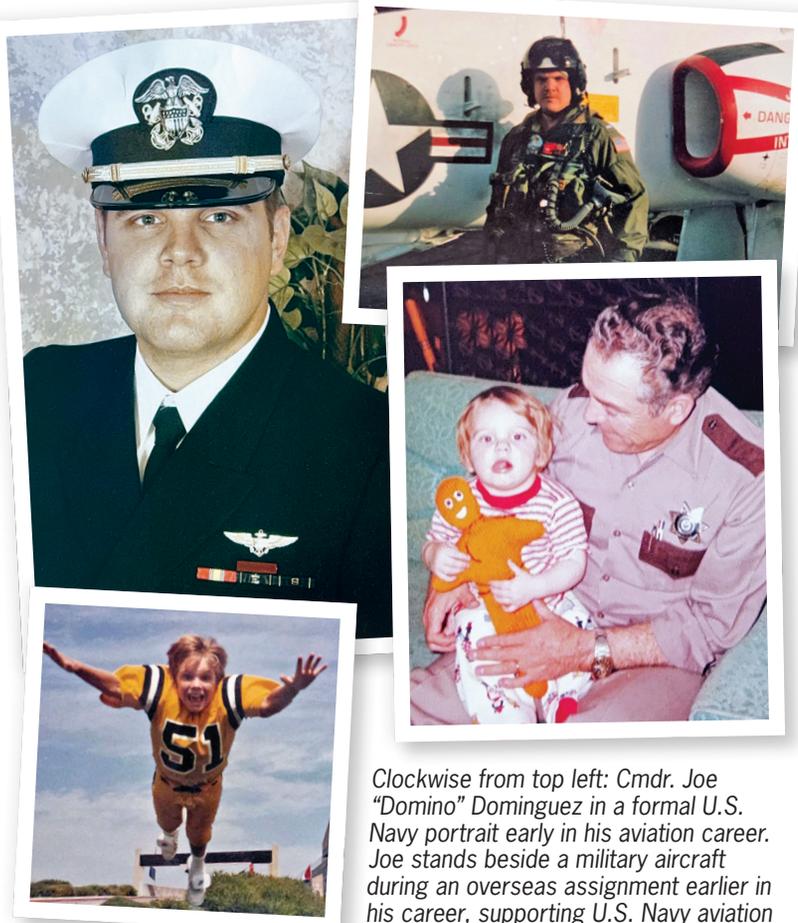
By Sharon K. Banks, Staff Writer and Columnist

Often flying high above Oregon's scenic landscape is a Navy officer with deep local roots. Cmdr. Joe "Domino" Dominguez, an Oregon native, commands missions that transport Navy and Marine Corps personnel and assets around the world — sometimes with sweeping views of his home state below.

Dominguez is the son of retired Army Sgt. First Class Rick Dominguez of Brownsville and the grandson of the late Herb Dominguez, a longtime Brownsville resident and former police chief. He enlisted in the Navy on Dec. 7, 1995, working on P-3 Orion aircraft in New Orleans. After advancing to Petty Officer Third Class, he was accepted into the Navy's BOOST program and later earned a Navy ROTC scholarship to attend the University of San Diego, where he received a degree in communications. He was commissioned in May 2003 and completed flight training with squadrons VT-6, VT-31, and VT-21.

Now assigned to Navy Reserve squadron VR-57 Conquistadors, Dominguez and his crews fly missions throughout the Middle East, Europe, and Asia in support of U.S. interests. Their work includes transporting Navy F/A-18 squadron crews and maintainers, Navy SEALs, Marine Security Forces, ship's company personnel during overseas crew swaps, and government delegations. Among the most meaningful missions for Dominguez are humanitarian operations.

*HERO continued on page 4*



Clockwise from top left: Cmdr. Joe "Domino" Dominguez in a formal U.S. Navy portrait early in his aviation career. Joe stands beside a military aircraft during an overseas assignment earlier in his career, supporting U.S. Navy aviation operations. A Joe as a toddler with his grandfather Herb Dominguez, a longtime Brownsville resident and former police chief. As a child, Joe leaps midair — an early glimpse of the energy and confidence that would later define his military career.

## INSIDE



2 LADY SOPHIA



5



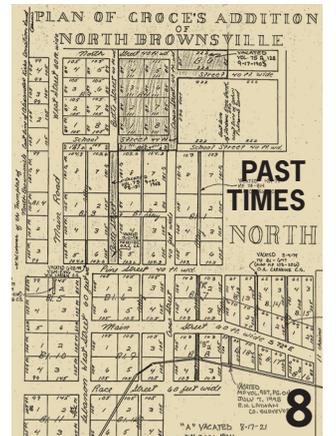
7



### Holiday Open House Held at the Moyer House

The historic Moyer House welcomed visitors Dec. 26–27 for its annual holiday open house, hosted by the Brownsville Women's Study Club. Decorated by club members, the home featured seasonal Christmas decor throughout the downstairs, offering a festive glimpse into Victorian holiday traditions.

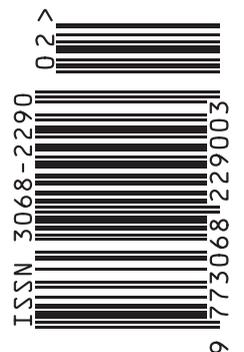
The Brownsville Women's Study Club has organized, decorated, staffed, and promoted the event for many years, continuing a long-standing community tradition that invites residents to enjoy the historic home during the holiday season. The open house was held from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. both days at the Moyer House, 204 N. Main St. in Brownsville. 🍷



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## ONGOING EVENTS

**Not Your Grandma's Bingo**

Mondays, Now–Mar. 2, 2026 • 6:30–8 p.m.  
Dixie Creek Saloon, 32994 OR-99E, Tangent

Tangent Together hosts an adults-only bingo night featuring cheeky humor, cash prizes, and \$1 game cards. Ages 21+ only.

**Free Coffee, Donuts, & Fellowship**

Wednesdays • 9:30 a.m. at Central Valley Church, 657 American Drive (not a church sponsored event).

**Not Rocket Science Trivia**

Thursdays • 6:30 p.m. (ongoing) • Free  
Dixie Creek Saloon, 32994 OR-99E, Tangent

Weekly pub trivia with bragging rights on the line. Bring a team and play every Thursday night.

**Friday Morning Veteran's Breakfast**

Fridays • 8-10 a.m. • Elmer's Restaurant  
2802 Santiam Hwy SE, Albany • 541-928-4227

Join fellow veterans over a cup of coffee and plate of good food as stories are shared, and memories and friendships created. All Veterans are welcome.

**Karaoke Saturdays at The Honey Hole**

Saturdays • 7 p.m. • 10 W 1st St, Halsey

Sing your heart out every Saturday night! Enjoy \$3 Coors draft specials and a \$15 club wrap with fries while you take the stage.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**Oregon's Trail of Tears Exhibit**

Tuesday–Saturday • Through Jan. 31 • 10 a.m.–4 p.m.  
Albany Regional Museum • 136 Lyon St. SW, Albany  
\$5 adults, \$3 teens, seniors, and military vets. Age 13 and under free.

A photography and history exhibit examining the 1856 forced march of Native peoples known as Oregon's Trail of Tears. Features landscape photography paired with historic journal entries.

<https://www.armuseum.com> • 541-967-7122

**East Albany Lions Club Sportsman & Gun Show**

Saturday–Sunday, Jan. 10–11, 2026  
Sat. 9 a.m.–5 p.m.; Sun. 9 a.m.–3 p.m.

Linn County Fair & Expo Center  
3700 Knox Butte Rd. E, Albany

Annual show featuring firearms, knives, ammunition, outdoor gear, collectibles, and accessories. Admission charged, all proceeds go to Lions Sight and Hearing, local charities, and community projects.

<https://www.eastalbanylionsclub.org>

**Tangent City Council Meeting**

Monday, January 12 • 6:30–9 p.m.  
Tangent City Hall, 32166 Old Oak Dr.

Every other month, the Tangent City Council holds a work session before the City Council meeting. The months with a work session start at 6:30p.m.

<https://www.tangentor.gov/government>

**Halsey City Council Meeting**

Tuesday, January 13 • 7 p.m.  
Halsey City Hall, 100 W. Halsey St.

<https://www.halseyor.gov/government>

**Halsey Blood Drive**

Friday, January 16 • 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Halsey Community Center, 100 W. Halsey St., Halsey  
Contact City Hall at 541-369-2522 to schedule an appointment. Donors will be entered for a chance to win a trip for two to Super Bowl LX in California.

**Easy Art with Diane Piro**

Saturday, January 17 • 1–4 p.m. • \$40

Brownsville Art Center • 255 N Main St, Brownsville  
A relaxed, beginner-friendly class focused on playful creativity using color and doodling.

Register by January 10: <https://brownsvilleart.org>

**Lady Sofia the Poodle Ready to Join Albany Carousel After 15 Years of Work**

By Jeff Brown, Staff Writer and Columnist

The Historic Carousel and Museum in Albany has completed its newest carousel animal, Lady



Lady Sofia the Poodle stands ready for her public debut at the Historic Carousel and Museum in Albany. The hand-carved carousel figure was completed on Dec. 25, 2025, after 15 years of volunteer work.

Sofia the Poodle, marking a major milestone for the volunteer-driven attraction in the heart of the Willamette Valley. Lady Sofia the Poodle was officially finished on December 25, 2025, after 15 years of carving and painting.

Lady Sofia is a standard white poodle inspired by a real dog owned by sponsors Robert and Katherine Lane. She features a simple brown saddle set on a pink-and-rose-colored saddle blanket and wears a red ribbon around her neck. On her right side are four handwritten names: Kaya, Harley, Hunter, and Bobby, representing the children of the Lane family.

Jack Giles, the carousel's lead carver, was the primary carver for Lady Sofia and estimates he spent more than 2,000 hours directly working on the figure. Pete Slenning also played a key role in her creation, contributing to the carving and artistic process that helped bring the poodle to life. Together, their work reflects the long-term dedication behind each carousel figure.

*LADY continued on page 16*



A small mouse carved into Lady Sofia's ear hair adds whimsy to the design, reflecting the tradition of incorporating surprises into each carousel figure.

**Lady Sofia the Poodle Unveiling**

Saturday, Jan. 17 • 11 a.m.

Historic Carousel & Museum • 503 First Ave. W, Albany  
Celebrate the official unveiling of Lady Sofia the Poodle, the carousel's newest hand-carved animal, completed after 15 years of volunteer work. Former carousel workers and sponsors will ride first at 10:30 a.m., followed by public rides at 11 a.m. Cake and commemorative merchandise will be available.

<https://albanycarousel.com> • 541-497-2934

**Kings Return: MLK Day Concert at PRAX**

Monday, Jan. 19 • 7 p.m. • \$10, students \$5.  
Detrick Hall, PRAX at Oregon State University

Acclaimed a cappella ensemble Kings Return performs a special Martin Luther King Jr. Day concert blending R&B, jazz, pop, and gospel. Lightbox Happy Hour begins at 6 p.m. with live music by the PRAX Resident Jazz Ensemble, drinks, and snacks available for purchase.

<https://prax.oregonstate.edu/events/kings-return>

**Murder on the Orient Express**

Friday, January 23 • 7 p.m. • Free, donations welcome  
Saturday, January 24 • 2 and 7 p.m.  
Valley Life Church, 80 E. Vine St., Lebanon

East Linn Christian Theatre presents Ken Ludwig's stage adaptation of the Agatha Christie mystery.

**Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde**

Jan. 23–Feb. 7, 2026 • 2:30 and 7:30 p.m.  
Albany Civic Theater • 111 W. First Ave., Albany

A classic tale of duality and obsession based on the Robert Louis Stevenson novel. Tickets and performance schedule available online.

<https://www.albanycivic.org>

**Watercolor Batik with Mishelle Tourtillott**

Saturday, January 31 • 1–4 p.m. • \$45

Brownsville Art Center • 255 N Main St, Brownsville  
Learn the watercolor batik process using wax resist to create layered artwork on Japanese paper. Ages 16 and up. Limited to six participants.

Register by January 24: <https://brownsvilleart.org>

**See page 13 for Brownsville Library events**

**See what's happening in Central Linn and add your event:**

<https://brownsvilletimes.org/community-calendar>

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THEATER REVIEW

# Community Theater at Its Best in Barefoot in the Park

By Jeff Brown, Staff Writer and Columnist

ALBANY — My wife and I attended Albany Civic Theater's production of Barefoot in the Park a few weeks ago and thoroughly enjoyed it. We love live theater, and this classic comedy was a reminder of why audiences from throughout the region continue to make the trip to Albany for ACT productions.



After purchasing our tickets online, we arrived at the theater and were shown to our seats near the front, close to the stage. That vantage point worked exceptionally well for this play, which takes place entirely in a sixth-story apartment in New York City. Being so close allowed us to fully appreciate the set, the physical comedy, and the many small expressions that added to the humor.

Directed by Becky Roth, the two-act production featured a cast of six actors. Aja Cook played Corey Bratter, the spirited and optimistic new wife, while Ben Sulzberger portrayed Paul Bratter, her more cautious and practical husband. The story follows the newlyweds as they move into their first apartment and begin navigating married life. The four supporting actors rounded out the cast beautifully, and everyone involved did a fantastic job bringing the script to life.

The audience laughed nearly constantly, though there were moments of spirited arguing between the characters. That was likely a reflection of the time in which the play was written and perhaps a reminder that newly married couples have always had their share of disagreements. Even so, the humor and warmth of the production carried through from start to finish.

This was the third time Albany Civic Theater has staged Barefoot in the Park, with the first production dating back to 1968, a testament to the play's enduring appeal and ACT's long history.

One of the oldest and most beloved community theaters in Oregon, Albany Civic Theater is a nonprofit, all-volunteer organization that has been a cornerstone of the arts in the Mid-Willamette Valley for generations. In addition to its main stage productions, ACT offers a strong youth program for ages 8 to 18, providing hands-on opportunities both on stage and behind the scenes.

Overall, it was an enjoyable night of live theater, and one we were glad to experience. 🌟

# Heritage Way Storefront Gets New Life as The Laundry Spot Prepares to Open in Albany

ALBANY — A familiar Albany storefront is preparing for a new chapter as The Laundry Spot opens at 2306 Heritage Way SE, south of the Fred Meyer complex near Marshall's. The location was previously home to Rich's Sewing & Vacuum, a longtime local business that served the community for many years.

The Laundry Spot is expected to offer a range of modern laundry services designed to meet everyday needs. Plans include self-serve washers and dryers, wash, dry, and fold service for customers short on time, and the potential addition of dry cleaning and basic alterations in the future. Once open, the business aims to provide a convenient option for residents seeking local laundry services.

Renovation work at the site has been underway, transforming the former sewing and vacuum shop into a dedicated laundromat. The change reflects a shift in how the space will be used while continuing to serve practical needs in the neighborhood.

Located near Fred Meyer, the new business is in a busy area easily accessible. Owners hope the combination of updated equipment and multiple service options will make The Laundry Spot a helpful addition to the community.

An official opening date and operating hours have not yet been announced. Watch for grand opening details and service updates from The Laundry Spot in the coming weeks. 🌟

## OSU EXTENSION SERVICE

# Adulting 101 Workshop Offered for High School Teens

TANGENT — High school-age teens are invited to take part in Adulting 101, a hands-on workshop series designed to help young people build practical skills for everyday life. The course focuses on easing the transition into adulthood through real-world learning and guided instruction.

Topics may include budgeting, basic home and car maintenance, meal planning and preparation, first aid, and self-defense. The program is open to all high school-age youth, whether or not they are members of 4-H.

The six-week course runs from Feb. 4 through March 11, 2026. Classes will meet one or two evenings per week — depending on instructor availability — at the Linn County OSU Extension Office in Tangent.

The cost is \$75 for Linn County high school students or \$50 for current 4-H members. For more information or questions, contact Cassi Hyde at [cassi.hyde@oregonstate.edu](mailto:cassi.hyde@oregonstate.edu). Registration and details are available at <https://beav.es/JCC>. 🌟

## OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY

# Kings Return to Headline OSU's 2026 MLK Commemoration

CORVALLIS — Oregon State University will observe the 44th annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Commemoration in January 2026 with a series of campus events focused on reflection, learning, and community engagement. Among the public-facing highlights is a Martin Luther King Jr. Day concert featuring the acclaimed a cappella ensemble Kings Return.



Presented by PRAX in partnership with the OSU Office of Institutional Diversity and the MLK Day Programming Committee, Kings Return will perform on Monday, Jan. 19, at Detrick Concert Hall. The group returns to Corvallis following a widely praised holiday concert in 2024.

Often compared to Take 6 and Boyz II Men, Kings Return is known for its genre-blending sound, seamlessly weaving R&B grooves, jazz improvisation, pop sensibilities, and soulful gospel influences into a distinctive and expressive vocal style.

The evening begins with a Lightbox Happy Hour at 6 p.m., featuring live music by the PRAX Resident Jazz Ensemble. Drinks and snacks will be available for purchase, and concertgoers are encouraged to explore PRAX's current visual arts exhibitions before the performance.

The Kings Return concert begins at 7 p.m. Admission is \$10, with a \$5 ticket price for students. Tickets and additional information are available at <https://prax.oregonstate.edu/events/kings-return>.

The broader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Commemoration continues through the end of January, concluding with the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service on Saturday, Jan. 31. A full schedule of events can be found at <https://diversity.oregonstate.edu/MLKCommemoration/commemoration-events>. 🌟

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**HERO** *continued from cover*

One of his proudest periods of service came during the record-setting 2017 hurricane season. After volunteering for disaster relief, Dominguez was designated officer in charge of a C-40 aircraft and crew, and sent to Naval Station Norfolk. His team supported relief efforts following hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria.

After Hurricane Harvey, the crew transported Navy helicopter crews and maintainers from locations including Whidbey Island, Washington, to Texas to assist with flood rescues in the Houston area. During Hurricane Irma, they delivered critical supplies to Key West, Florida, including portable restrooms, water, and Meals Ready to Eat amid widespread outages. Following Hurricane Maria, the crew returned unused supplies to Norfolk for shipment by sea, while other squadrons delivered aid to Puerto Rico once airfields reopened.

Beyond operational missions, Dominguez values flights through the military's space-available program, which allows active-duty and retired service members and their families to travel aboard military aircraft when seats are available.

Based at Naval Air Station North Island in San Diego, VR-57 is part of the U.S. Navy Reserve's C-40 fleet, staffed largely by reservists from a wide range of civilian professions. During a recent mission, Dominguez and his crew flew over Oregon, catching a glimpse of Crater Lake while transporting F/A-18 Growler crews returning to Whidbey Island after predeployment training.

Dominguez's career reflects a lifelong commitment to service shaped by family tradition and strong ties to Brownsville. Whether supporting global operations or delivering aid in times of crisis, he carries his hometown with him — an enduring point of pride for the Brownsville community. 🌟



From top left: Cmdr. Joe "Domino" Dominguez as a young adult, as a toddler, during his Navy aviation career, and as a child with his parents. The images trace a life shaped by family, service, and deep roots in Brownsville.

PHOTOS PROVIDED BY JOE DOMINGUEZ

**CITY OF HALSEY****Halsey Mayor's Corner: Welcoming a New Year of Kindness and Community**

By Jerry Lachenbruch, Mayor of Halsey

As we welcome a new year, I want to wish each of you a happy, healthy, and hopeful January. A new year offers us a fresh start — a time to reflect on where we've been, appreciate what we've accomplished together, and look ahead with optimism for what's to come.

Halsey has always been a community built on kindness, neighbors helping neighbors, and a shared sense of pride in our small town. As we step into this new year, I encourage all of us to carry those values forward. Simple acts of kindness — checking in on a neighbor, lending a hand, or offering a smile — can make a meaningful difference and help strengthen the bonds that connect us.

This year, let's focus on coming together as a community. Whether it's participating in local events, supporting our local businesses, volunteering, or simply engaging in positive conversations, every effort helps create a welcoming and inclusive Halsey. When we work together with respect and understanding, we build a stronger foundation for our town and for future generations. On behalf of the City Council and City staff, thank you for your continued involvement, patience, and commitment to Halsey. Your care for this community is what makes our town such a special place to live. May the new year bring renewed energy, cooperation, and hope. Let's make 2026 a year defined by positivity, kindness, and unity. As always, I remain your mayor. Remember, the Council and I work for you, so please let us know what you think Halsey needs. 🌟

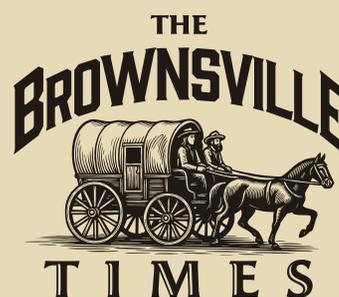
**Budget Committee Openings**

The City of Halsey is seeking residents to serve on its Budget Committee for the 2026–2027 budget cycle. Committee members help review city finances and advise on funding priorities and projects.

The Budget Committee typically meets one to three evenings between March and May. Applicants must be registered voters, have lived within Halsey city limits for at least one year, and be willing to serve a three-year term.

Applications will be reviewed and appointments made by the City Council at its March meeting. Applications are available at City Hall or online at <https://www.halseyor.gov> and must be received by Monday, March 2.

For more information about the budget process, contact City Hall at 101 Halsey St., 541-369-2522. 🌟



Periodical postage paid at Brownsville, OR (USPS 0680-000).

Published every Thursday by The Brownsville Times, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit.

POSTMASTER: Send change of address to The Brownsville Times PO Box 278 Brownsville OR 97327

**SUBSCRIPTION RATES:**

PRINT & DIGITAL yearly \$96 monthly \$8  
DIGITAL ONLY yearly \$36 monthly \$3

Monthly subscriptions must be paid by credit card or ACH transfer. For ACH payments, please include a voided check.

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**Deadline for Advertising:** Thursday at 5 p.m. (for the following issue)

**Deadline for Article Submissions:** Friday at Noon. (for the following week's issue)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: <https://brownsvilletimes.org/contact>

EDITORIAL GUIDELINES: <https://brownsvilletimes.org/editorial-policy>

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343 N Main St, Brownsville OR 97327

**Office Hours:** Tuesday-Saturday 9 a.m. to noon, Thursdays 1 to 4 p.m.

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**LINN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**Commissioners Address End-of-the-year Items**

By Alex Paul, Linn County Communications Officer

ALBANY — Linn County Commissioners Roger Nyquist, Sherrie Sprenger and Will Tucker addressed a number of end-of-the-year housekeeping items at their December 30 board meeting.

The commissioners:

- Elected Commissioner Nyquist as chairman of the board and Commissioner Tucker as vice-chairman for 2026.
- Approved the Albany Democrat-Herald and The New Era (Sweet Home and Lebanon) as official newspapers of record for publication of legal notices.
- Appointed Matt Pitcher as the Linn County Tax Collector.
- Approved a two-year extension of a four-year contract with Crabtree Automotive to provide maintenance for Linn County Sheriff's Office vehicles.
- Appointed John E. Kennedy III of Lebanon and Danielle M. Myers of Brownsville as Justices of the Peace pro tempore for District 4A.
- Held a second reading of an ordinance designating the Lyons Rural Fire Protection District to provide service for Linn County Ambulance Service Area Code 7. The Idanha-Detroit Rural Fire Protection District had previously covered that service area, but discontinued ambulance service in 2016. The ordinance will take effect on March 30, 2026.
- Approved a code text amendment to allow accessory dwelling units (ADUs) in the Urban Growth Area — Rural Residential zoning district and the Rural Residential zoning district.
- Announced a management staff meeting will be held at 11:30 a.m. on Wednesday, January 7, in the courthouse basement meeting room.
- Adjourned the Board of Commissioners meeting and convened a meeting of the 4-H and Extension Service District governing board. Commissioner Tucker was elected chair and Commissioner Sprenger was elected vice-chair for 2026. 🌻

**TABLE TALK: DINING IN AROUND BROWNSVILLE**

**Rancho Hacienda Real Delivers Authentic Mexican Cuisine in Albany**

By Jeff Brown, Staff Writer and Columnist

ALBANY — I recently ate at Rancho Hacienda Real in Albany and came away impressed. The restaurant is located at 2845 Santiam Hwy SE and is open daily from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. They also have a full bar. This is not their only location. There are four Hacienda Real restaurants in Salem and one in Beaverton.



Our waiter, Rene, was friendly and helpful without being overbearing. He

mentioned that the building used to be a Chinese restaurant and that they remodeled more than 90 percent of the space. The work shows. Both the interior and exterior look clean, updated, and well put together. Nothing felt dated or worn.

As soon as we sat down, we were brought warm corn chips, a large container of salsa, and a side of refried beans for dipping. The chips were fresh and warm, which always matters. The salsa had good flavor without being overly spicy, and the beans were a nice addition that you do not always experience.

We were not really hungry but needed something, so we both ordered from the à la carte section. I ordered two side items, a chile relleno and a shredded beef tamale. Both were very good. The chile relleno was cooked properly and had good flavor without being greasy. The shredded beef tamale was tender and well seasoned. Everything tasted fresh and was served hot.

My wife ordered the shredded beef chimichanga. It came out crispy on the outside and filled with shredded beef that had good flavor and texture. She enjoyed it and finished most of the plate, which says a lot.

Rancho Hacienda Real describes their food as bold, authentic Jalisco-style Mexican cuisine. While I am not an expert on regional Mexican food, what we ate was well prepared, satisfying, and better than average. With solid Yelp ratings, good service, and consistent food, this restaurant feels like a strong addition to Albany's dining options. We will be back. 🌻

PHOTOS BY JEFF BROWN



**WHERE TO EAT**

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**TARWEED FOLK SCHOOL**

**February Classes**

CORVALLIS — Tarweed Folk School has announced a slate of hands-on classes for February 2026, offering opportunities to learn practical skills, explore the natural world, and connect through shared knowledge and craft.



The month begins on Wednesday, Feb. 4, with Herbs to Help Build and Boost Immunity, led by Jaci Guereña. This evening class runs from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. and focuses on winter wellness through diet, lifestyle habits, and herbal choices.

Participants will also blend an herbal tea to take home. The class is open to adults and interested youth ages 13–17 when a parent or guardian is also registered.

On Sunday, Feb. 22, Sunia Yang leads Discovering Lichens, a series of free guided walks exploring lichen diversity in both town and rural settings. These slow-paced walks introduce participants to lichens through close observation with hand lenses and microscopes, highlighting what these often-overlooked organisms reveal about environmental health.



Also on Feb. 22, Lacto-Fermentation Basics: Sauerkraut with Margot Schwarz will be held from 9 a.m. to noon. This class explores the intersection of micro-



biology and culinary tradition, guiding students through the basics of home fermentation, the health benefits of lacto-fermented foods, and the preparation of sauerkraut using a variety of cultural approaches. Participants will process cabbage in class and learn how to ferment foods at home safely.



The month concludes Saturday, Feb. 28, with Yoghurt, Granola, and the Joy of Cooperation, led by Albert Kong from 1 to 4 p.m. The class explores small-scale food production and community-based cooperation, with participants learning to make yogurt and granola and dis-



cussing cooperative production models.

Classes fill quickly. Full registration details, tuition information, and the complete Spring 2026 lineup are available at <https://www.tarweedfolkschool.com/upcoming-classes>.

PHOTOS PROVIDED BY TARWEED FOLK SCHOOL

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# Protecting Pets in Winter Weather

Winter weather can bring fun in the snow. Still, it also requires extra attention to pets' safety. Colder temperatures, ice, and seasonal hazards can put animals at risk if proper precautions are not taken. The following tips can help keep pets healthy and safe during the winter months.

Monitor your pet's food intake. Pets that live outdoors may need additional calories in winter to maintain body heat. Indoor pets often get less exercise during cold weather and may require fewer calories to avoid weight gain.

Oregon law requires that companion animals be provided with shelter from the elements. Pets should also have access to fresh water, which should be replaced several times a day. Consider using a bowl designed to prevent water from freezing.

During severe weather, allow outdoor pets to come indoors or into a garage or enclosed space where they can stay warm and dry.

Limit outdoor exposure during extreme cold. Pets can develop frostbite on ears, tails, and paws, especially during prolonged exposure to freezing temperatures.

When walking dogs in icy conditions, check their paws frequently for ice buildup between their toes and irritation caused by salt or gravel on sidewalks and roads.

Dogs that enjoy swimming should be kept on a leash around open water or unstable ice. Cold water can cause hypothermia quickly, and pets may be unable to climb out on their own.

Before starting your car, check for cats that may be sheltering near the engine for warmth. Honking the horn or tapping on the hood can help prevent serious injury.

Antifreeze is hazardous to pets. Even small amounts can cause severe kidney damage or death. Use pet-safe antifreeze products containing propylene glycol instead of ethylene glycol and clean up spills immediately. Clay cat litter can absorb spills and should be discarded once it is saturated.

Taking a few extra precautions during winter can help ensure pets stay safe, warm, and healthy throughout the season. ❄️



Buddy getting a sled ride on a hike at Santiam Wagon Road to House Rock in the Santiam Pass. MIKAYLE STOLE

## CRITTER CHRONICLES

# Westy and Snowball

As told to Sharon K. Banks, Staff Writer and Columnist by Judith "Jude" Bushnell

When my father married my stepmother, I was three years old. She had adopted a daughter who was four at the time, and she also had a wonderful collie named Westy. My new sister and I both adored Westy, but we shared an even greater wish — we desperately wanted a kitty. Our mother, however, did not like cats in any way, and her answer was a firm and final no.

Not long after, my sister and I were coming down the stairs when the front door opened, and Dad stepped inside holding a tiny, pure white kitten. We immediately began to scream with joy until Dad put his finger to his lips, motioning for silence. We all turned and looked into the living room, where Westy, our gentle collie, was lying peacefully in the middle of the floor.

Dad leaned down and gently set the kitten on the carpet. In seconds, my sister and I named her Snowball. Without hesitation, Snowball toddled straight over to Westy and curled up against her stomach. Westy lowered her head, wrapped a leg around the kitten, and the two of them settled in together as if they had always belonged that way. It was love at first sight. From that day on, they were inseparable, enjoying each other's company every single day.

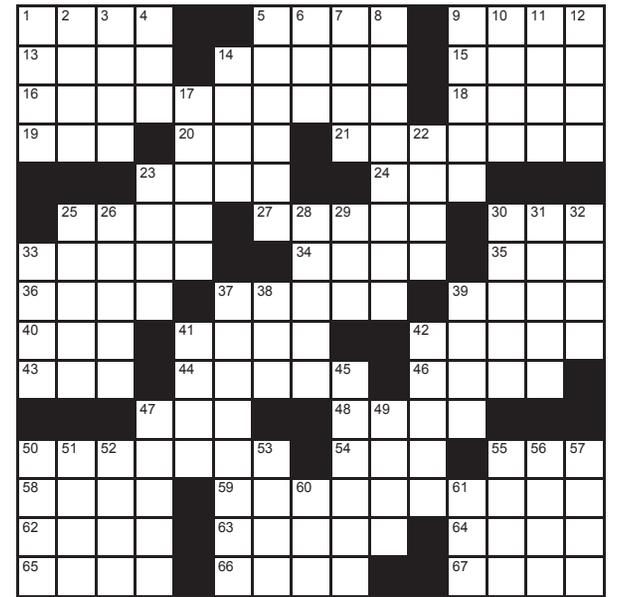


That winter, McMinnville received more snow than it had ever seen. One afternoon, I was standing in the kitchen when I noticed Snowball outside, moving across the snow — but her legs weren't moving. Suddenly, I spotted Westy's tail. She was trudging through the deep snow with Snowball perched on her back, carefully carrying her to a tree in the backyard. Westy stopped and gently lowered herself so Snowball could hop off and do her business. When Snowball finished, Westy lay back down, waited patiently, and then carried her safely back through the snow and inside the house.

On my thirteenth birthday, we moved to California. Westy came with us, but Snowball did not. According to our mother, Snowball had run away. My sister and I were devastated, and we didn't believe it — any more than Westy did, as she searched for her friend for days.

Over the years, we came to understand something important. No matter how it ended, we were grateful. Grateful that Dad had brought Snowball into our lives at all. Thankful for the ten years we had with her. And grateful for the beautiful, unforgettable love we witnessed between a little white kitten and a devoted collie named Westy. ❄️

# CROSSWORD PUZZLE



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  - 18 Hostels
  - 19 Legume
  - 20 Food grain
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  - 23 Wager
  - 24 Golf tee
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  - 10 Hindu princess
  - 11 Poet Sexton
  - 12 Kettle of fish
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- SCUFO \_\_\_\_\_
- LAOSG \_\_\_\_\_
- WNERTI \_\_\_\_\_

PUZZLE Solutions on page 12

PAST TIMES

# Brownsville's Chinese Laundry Part 1 of 5

By Allen L. Buzzard, Columnist

Rail service to Brownsville, Oregon, began at noon on Tuesday, December 28, 1880 (Albany Register, Albany, Oregon, December 31, 1880, n.p., column 4). It's unclear, however, if immigrant Chinese laborers were employed in grading, laying ties, or securing rails of The Oregonian Railway Company, Limited's narrow gauge to Brownsville, Oregon, from Ray's Landing on the Willamette River. But from 1884



ALLEN L. BUZZARD

The former site of Brownsville's Chinese Laundry is now part of Library Park behind the Brownsville Library, where the mill race once crossed diagonally through the property. The triangular shape of the parcel remains evident in today's landscape.

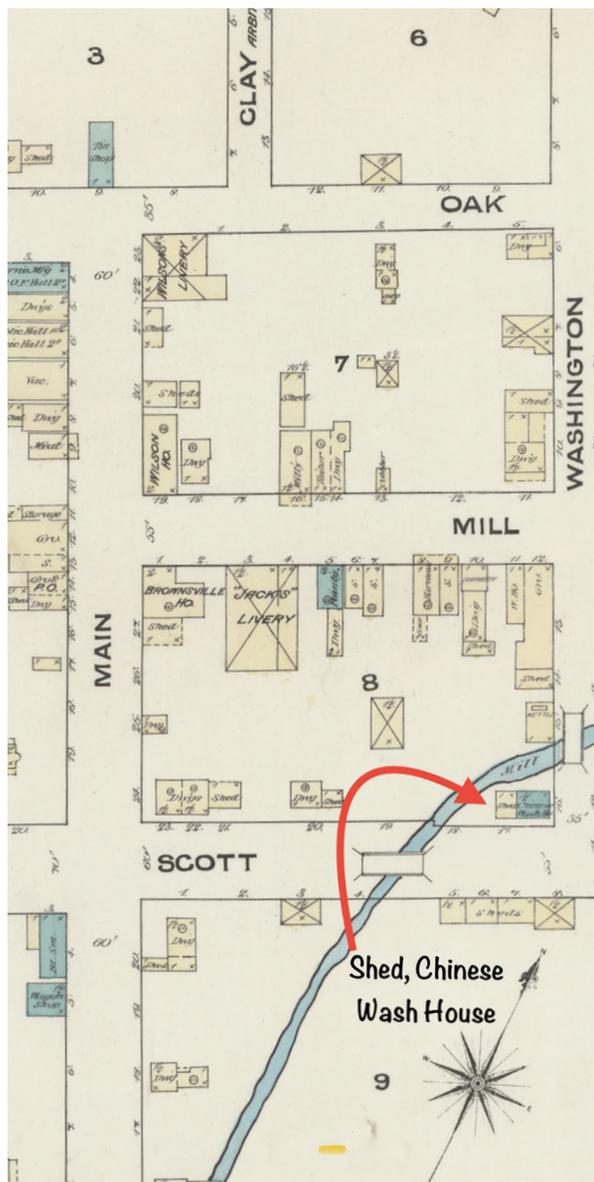
through 1892, a Chinese Wash House stood atop the corner triangular plot of land within Lot 4, Block 9, Plat of North Brownsville (filed April 5, 1866), Linn County, Oregon (Brownsville's Old Town Commercial zone today). Resembling a right triangle, the improved property was bound by Scott (running east-west) and Washington (oriented north-south) with the Mill Stream forming its hypotenuse.

Today, this triangular plot of land is bound by Park Avenue — running east-west, formerly known as: "College Avenue;" "Race" before that; and "Scott" even earlier — to its south and Averill Street — oriented north-south, formerly known as: "Cross;" yet previously mapped as "Washington" — to its east; and the same defunct mill race cutting diagonally across it. See inset from one-sheet May 1884 Sanborn Map & Publishing Co., Limited's first known published fire insurance map of [North] Brownsville, Oregon.

Later, vacant lots 3, 4 (Block 9) were merged into a single tax lot following an October 20, 1942 Linn County foreclosure (Book 159, Page 326, Linn County Deeds & Records). Subsequently, it (Tax Account 284337, Map 13S02W31CB 08200) became the site of Brownsville Library which was built in 1977. The library's back lawn — including the exact same diagonal portion of the abandoned mill race, Menefee Pathway, and corresponding triangular plot with a U.S. Civil War Veterans' Memorial — is often simply called "Library Park" today.

Although this small triangular plot was once the site of Brownsville's Chinese Laundry, the circumstances, context and history as to why a Chinese Wash House operated here for many years but then disappeared needs explanation. To be continued in the next issue. 🌀

Allen L. Buzzard is a retired educator. He especially enjoys sharing local history and traveling the world.



Detail from an 1884 Sanborn fire insurance map identifies the "Shed, Chinese Wash House" along the mill race on Scott Street in North Brownsville, showing the triangular parcel where the Chinese laundry operated in the late 19th century.

KIDS' KORNER

# Promises

By Sandra Beckwith, Staff Writer and Columnist

This time of year, you will hear many people talk about resolutions, which are basically goals to improve their behavior. We "resolve" or "decide" that we want to change habits. Many of us feel the start of a new year is a time to start anew, like making healthier decisions.

A resolution is also a promise. So, what happens when you make a promise to yourself? What's the consequence or downside to coming up short on your promises?



Part of the trick to making New Year's resolutions is not to make plans for gigantic changes. Enormous goals without the practice of following through on smaller goals mean you probably are not going to succeed. Like everything else, keeping your promises takes practice.

Have you ever heard the phrase "being a person of your word"? That means when you make a promise, you try as hard as you can to fulfill what you have promised to do. When you keep a promise, you are also showing you can be trusted with responsibility, and there are many benefits to be had in that.

The opposite is also true. If you often say you're going to do something and put little effort, or none at all, to completing the task, then you send the message that others cannot depend on you, and fewer opportunities will come your way. That hurts you.

Start small. If you say you're going to take out the trash, do it. If you say you're going to clean your room, do it. Then, when it comes time to get something you want, rewards come your way because others can depend on you!

Even if you make a promise to yourself, set goals you will genuinely want to pursue. Here's a start for you, "I promise to keep my promises!" 🌀

Sandra Beckwith is a local author, educator, and contributor to Kids' Korner. She is the author of the Master Keys for Kids series, which encourages children to build character, responsibility, and confidence through everyday lessons. Beckwith enjoys helping young readers learn how small choices can lead to positive change at home, at school, and in their communities. You can be reached at [sbeckwith1@icloud.com](mailto:sbeckwith1@icloud.com)

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## AMERICAN LEGION

## Rhyme Away! The Navy's Quirkiest New Years Tradition

By an Ordinary Seaman

Friends, another year has dawned, and for many of us, that means a fresh start, maybe a resolution to finally clean out the garage (good luck with that). In my world, it meant another round of “Traditional Christmas” — you know, the one with the tree, the carols, and enough pie to sink a small ship. These holiday traditions, I must say, warm my heart. They also simplify things; you know what you're doing and when you're doing it. No surprises, just good old-fashioned comfort.

The military, bless its structured soul, is also a big fan of tradition. And for good reason! These little ceremonies and rituals are designed to simplify life, especially when things get, shall we say, a bit dicey. Take the hand salute, for instance. A crisp gesture of respect from a junior to a senior officer, and a nod of acknowledgment in return — “Got your back, kid.” But, as with all good traditions, there's always a quirky bit. In the Navy, a sailor doesn't salute unless they're “covered,” meaning they're wearing a hat. No hat, no salute. The origins of this nautical quirk? Lost to the deep, murky waters of naval lore, probably somewhere near a forgotten rum barrel.

But my favorite, and perhaps the daffiest, naval tradition unfolds on the first watch of the new year. From midnight to 4 a.m., during the dreaded “mid-watch,” the Officer of the Deck (OOD) on every U.S. Navy ship is encouraged — not ordered, mind you, but encouraged — to write their official deck log in poetic form.

Now, the deck log is no ordinary diary. It's a legally binding, historically significant document. It chronicles the ship's every move, the weather, the status of the engineering plant, who's on watch, and whether anyone's trying to attack them. Important stuff, right? And yet, for one fleeting mid-watch, amidst all that serious business, the OOD is given the green light to channel their inner Walt Whitman, or, more likely, Dr. Seuss.

The wiser OODs, of course, rally the troops, enlisting the help of anyone on watch who might have a latent lyrical talent (a recent Princeton grad with a literature degree, perhaps?). And while some entries might make even the most seasoned poet wince, most turn out pretty well, weaving together the mandatory details with a touch of humor and personality. It's a moment where the rigid discipline of naval life gets a playful, poetic wink. And I, for one, think it's absolutely brilliant.

Here's a little something that might have popped up in a New Year's log from back in the day:

The New Year's morn, a misty gray.  
The USS Brownsville, now underway.  
Steaming at ten, through the gentle swell,  
Our engines hum; all is well.  
Fresh water flows, and power's on tap,  
From generators, no need for a nap.  
Brownsville, our port, a cozy old town,  
With friendly faces, never a frown.  
Commander Norm, with a watchful eye,  
Ensures our course beneath the sky.  
No hostile craft, no dangers in sight,  
Just peaceful waters, calm and bright.  
With spirits high, we greet the day,  
Happy New Year, hip-hip-hooray!

USS Brownsville (DE-973) – 01 January 2026



## LONG GRAY BRAID MUSINGS

## Retirement

By Annie Swensen, Columnist

The long gray braid theory was a thought I had shortly after I turned 60 — I was working in an unemployment insurance call center. My responsibility to the customers, to the employees, and to the administration was intensely challenging. I believed that my energy for this could only last so long, and I looked forward to retiring at 65. Yet I wondered — how would I become the next person in my life?

It started with an image... I saw myself, with a long gray braid, wearing coveralls and a jean jacket, standing in my garden, my dog at my side. I'd smile and wave at neighbors driving up and down the road, and they would tell each other, “There's that dotty old lady in her garden again.”

Now... WHO would I be? I knew people who had retired, and they seemed to find things to do. But when you asked them, they did not identify themselves as travelers, golfers, gamers, or volunteers. They identified as “retired” from some job. That was scary to me. When you wake up that first morning, with years ahead of you, there are so many things you can do, but is all you are, who you were?

It struck me that all of our lives even from childhood, we are working toward the next self-being. Our young years in school are preparation for some anticipated life — a job

or career, having a family. Every day of our lives, we are planning and preparing, doing and learning, to become the next version of ourselves.

So, who did I want to be when I retired? I thought about the things I loved doing — gardening, my dogs, writing. I wanted to be a dog trainer, a master gardener, and a writer. It was time to start learning the skills, achieving the knowledge, and gaining expertise. I would take those skills into retirement and lead a fulfilling new chapter in my life. And I had to want that life more than the one I was experiencing now... it had to be me.

I shared my theory about my long gray braid with many coworkers. They delighted in my story, though they often expressed concern that one day I would leave, without a word. At the time, I reassured them, “When I become a better version of me, you can anticipate my retiring. That will take time. Given how far I have to go, I'll be working for a long time,” adding, “Years from now, you'll likely look into my office to find a pile of dust in my chair, with a long gray braid swirled on top of it.”

My job suddenly ended at 63, cutting short my preparations, but with many New Year's resolutions, I was able to focus. Today, I am a dog-loving, gardening, writer. ☼

## History of New Years Resolutions

By Jeff Brown, Staff Writer and Columnist

Each January, people across the country set fresh goals for healthier habits, better finances, or personal growth. The tradition of New Years resolutions is far older than many realize, stretching back thousands of years.

Historians trace the practice to ancient Babylon, where citizens made annual promises to their gods at the start of each year. The Romans later adopted a similar custom, making commitments to Janus, the god of beginnings, whose two faces were believed to look both forward and backward. Over time, the practice shifted from religious vows to personal pledges, eventually becoming a standard part of modern New Years celebrations.

In the United States, resolutions became especially popular in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as newspapers, magazines, and civic groups encouraged people to begin the year with self-improvement. Even then, humorists often joked about how quickly those promises faded.

Recent studies show that the pattern has not changed much. Surveys commonly report that fewer than half of all resolutions last beyond the first month. By the end of the year, only a small percentage of people say they have fully kept the goals they set. The most common challenges include a lack of time, fading motivation, and overly ambitious goals.

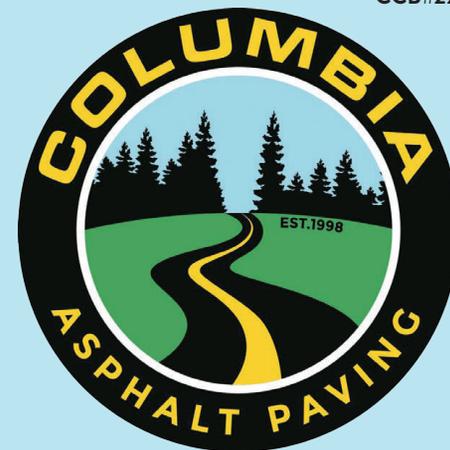
Experts note that resolutions tend to hold up better when people set specific, realistic targets. Clear steps, such as walking ten minutes each day or saving a small amount each week, are more likely to succeed than broad ambitions to get healthier or improve finances. Support

from friends and family also plays a significant role in whether a person stays on track.

Despite the mixed success rate, the tradition endures. Many people view the start of a new year as a fresh start and a chance to reflect on what they want to improve. Whether the resolutions last 12 months or only a few weeks, the practice remains a familiar and hopeful part of the New Year holiday. ☼

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313 Washburn St · 541-466-5030

Sunday School 9:45 a.m.  
Sunday Services 11 a.m. & 6 p.m.  
Classes Wednesday 7 p.m. all ages

### Brownsville Christian Church

117 N Main St · 541-466-3273  
<https://brownvillechristianchurch.com>

Sunday Service and Children's Church 11 a.m.  
Adult classes 10 a.m.

### Brownsville Community Church

198 Washburn St · 541-936-9131  
<https://hislifeinbrownsville.com>

### Brownsville Mennonite Church

34795 OR-228 · 541-466-5622

### Central Valley Church

657 American Dr · Halsey · 503-602-6796  
<https://www.cvchalsey.com>

Sunday Corporate Service 8 a.m.  
Sunday School 9:30 a.m. (during school year)  
Sunday Service: 10:30 a.m.  
Monday Prayer 7-8 p.m.  
Wednesday Community Coffee & Donuts 9:30 a.m.

### Crawfordsville Calvary Chapel

38353 Glass St · 541-730-4519  
<https://www.crawfordsvillecc.org>

Sunday Service 10 a.m.

### First Baptist Church of Brownsville

27910 7 Mile Ln · 541-642-3000  
<https://www.fbcbrownvilleoregon.org>

Sunday Services and Nursery 9 and 10:45 a.m.

### Halsey Mennonite Church

910 E 1st St · 712-432-8773  
<https://www.halseymennonite.org>

Sunday Service 10 a.m.  
1st & 3rd Sunday evening 6 p.m.  
Prayer meeting 1st & 3rd Wednesdays 7:30 p.m.

### Harvest Reformed Baptist Church

411 W 2nd St · Halsey · 541-220-1902  
<https://harvesttrbc.org>

Sunday School 9 a.m.  
Sunday Service 10:30 a.m.  
Sunday Fellowship Meal Noon

### Holy Trinity Catholic Church

104 W Blakely Ave · Brownsville · 541-367-2530  
[holytrinitybrownvilleor@gmail.com](mailto:holytrinitybrownvilleor@gmail.com)

Weekday Mass Wednesday Noon  
Sunday Service 11:30 a.m.

### Oakville Presbyterian Church

29970 Church Dr · Shedd · 541-758-0647  
<https://oakvillechurch.org>

Sunday Service 10 a.m.

### Riverside Christian Fellowship

29360 Abraham Dr · Shedd (Peoria) · 360-880-4734

Sunday Prayer 9:30 a.m.  
Sunday Service 10 a.m.  
Sunday School 11 a.m.

### Spirit of the Valley United Methodist Church

611 W 3rd St · Halsey · 541-654-8144  
[spiritofthevalleyumc@gmail.com](mailto:spiritofthevalleyumc@gmail.com)

Sunday School 9:30 a.m.  
Worship Service 10:30 a.m.

### The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

1111 North Main St · 541-570-2903

Sunday Service 10 a.m.

### Valley Christian Fellowship

690 W 2nd St · Halsey · 732-434-3592  
<https://vcfhalsey.com>

Sunday Service 10 a.m. & Wednesdays 7:15 p.m.

## OBITUARIES

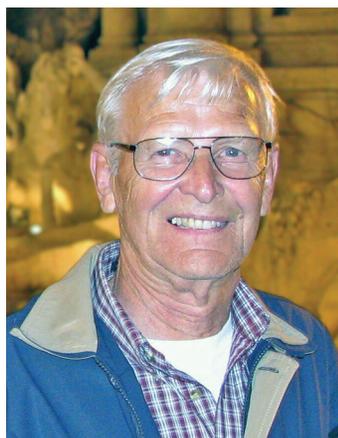
### Harry H. Hopla

October 4, 1936–December 28, 2025

Harry H. Hopla was born on October 4, 1936, in Arco, Idaho, to Lydia and Leo E. Hopla. His family, including his sister and three brothers, moved to the Willamette Valley in 1951 and lived in Brownsville, Oregon.

Soon after graduating from high school, Harry joined the U.S. Air Force. In 1956, he married his high school sweetheart, Billie Jo Barnes. Shortly after, Harry was stationed in Japan for two years.

After his discharge from the Air Force, the couple moved to Portland, OR, where Harry continued his education in computer science. Following another move to Seattle, WA,



Harry and Billie Jo welcomed their daughter, Donna, and son, Steve.

In 1965, the family moved to Newark, CA, where Harry worked at Stanford Research Institute for 32 years. Upon his retirement in 1997, he enjoyed having time to play golf and travel the world. Harry and Billie Jo were married for 69 years.

Harry's family adored his fun-loving, kind nature and willingness to lend a hand. All will miss his warm presence.

Harry is survived by wife, Billie Jo, daughter Donna, son Steve (Holly), grandchildren Drew, Robin, Clare, and Shane, brother Doyle (Barbara), and sister-in-law Diane. ☹️

### Thelma Jean Putman

February 9, 1929–November 24, 2025

Thelma Jean Putman, affectionately known to friends and family as Jean, passed away peacefully, surrounded by her loving family, on November 24, 2025. She was born on February 9, 1929, in the quaint town of Dunsmuir, California, to Frank and Mildred Eller. She was the youngest of two older siblings, Joan and Harold.

The family moved to Oakland, CA, where her parents owned and operated Ellers 5 and 10 Variety Store for 38 years. She and her siblings helped run the store while attending school. Jean graduated from Fremont HS in 1947. She worked briefly at a phone company before marrying at 21. She had two children, Gary and Linda.

When that marriage ended, she moved with her children to Albany, OR. Jean married Ed Putman in October 1956, blending his three children, Richard, Brenda, and Russ, with her two children, Gary and Linda. The following August, the last child, Pam, completed the family.

In 1958, they moved to a community in North Albany, among the farmers, and for 35 years raised their family, creating an orchard and a garden that produced most of what fed them. Jean and her mother, Mildred, preserved everything! They canned and froze fruit and vegetables that lasted all year! She loved to bake... which Ed loved, too!

Jean cherished her family and home, cooking, cleaning, sewing, and caring for everyone. She served on the Election Board at Fir Grove Elementary while the children were attending there.

She belonged to a women's bowling league, earning many badges and trophies. Jean especially loved the many camping and hunting trips she and Ed took over the years. The family has many memories of Central Oregon camping when they owned property in Ponderosa Pines and of hunting out at Fort Rock.

In 1993, Jean and Ed moved to Brownsville, OR, and lived happily for 27 years, gardening, attending Brownsville Christian Church, and enjoying giving baked and garden goodies.

When Ed passed in 2020, Jean moved to Bonaventure Assisted Living in Albany. She lived there for five years, with many visits to the coast with Pam and Linda and close proximity to family in Albany, allowing time together.

Last year, Jean moved to a first-floor apartment at Mennonite Village in Quail Run. She enjoyed watching the birds at her window (and sometimes that big squirrel, too). She loved working on jigsaw puzzles... she and Gary finished 100s in the last five years! The whole family enjoyed "puzzling" with her.

During her short time at Quail Run, Jean was loved and nurtured by the staff, and everyone commented on her sweet, loving nature.

Jean lived a long, full life. She loved our Lord and shone His Light. She was a wonderful mother, grandmother, wife, daughter, sister, aunt, and friend, and will be missed by many. Jean's life was a rich tapestry woven with threads of love, spirit, and gentleness. Her passing leaves a legacy of warmth and compassion that touched the hearts of all who knew her.

Jean is survived by her son, Gary Putman, 75; daughters Brenda Carr, 80; Linda Jardine, 72; and Pam Curl, 68; 11 grandchildren; 20 great-grandchildren; and three great-great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her husband, Ed; her sons, Richard and Russell; her parents; and her brother and sister.

There will be a Celebration of Life on Saturday, January 17, at 1 p.m., at the Brownsville Christian Church Fellowship Hall (next to the church), 117 N. Main St., Brownsville, OR.

Please join us to share stories and gather in love for a beautiful soul. There will be food and drink to enjoy, too.

If you'd like to donate in Jean's honor, she requested that donations be made to the Brownsville Cemetery or the Brownsville EMT/Fire and Rescue.

Please join us to share stories and gather in love for a beautiful soul. There will be food and drink to enjoy, too. ☹️



Danielle M. Myers, Esq.  
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## Residents Clear Crawfordsville School Gym After Closure

By Mikayle Stole, Editor

CRAWFORDSVILLE — Residents and parents empty stored items from the Crawfordsville School gymnasium after being told the space could no longer be used due to structural concerns. Community members said



MIKAYLE STOLE

Community members move stored items out of the former Crawfordsville School gym built in 1948 after the space was closed due to structural concerns.

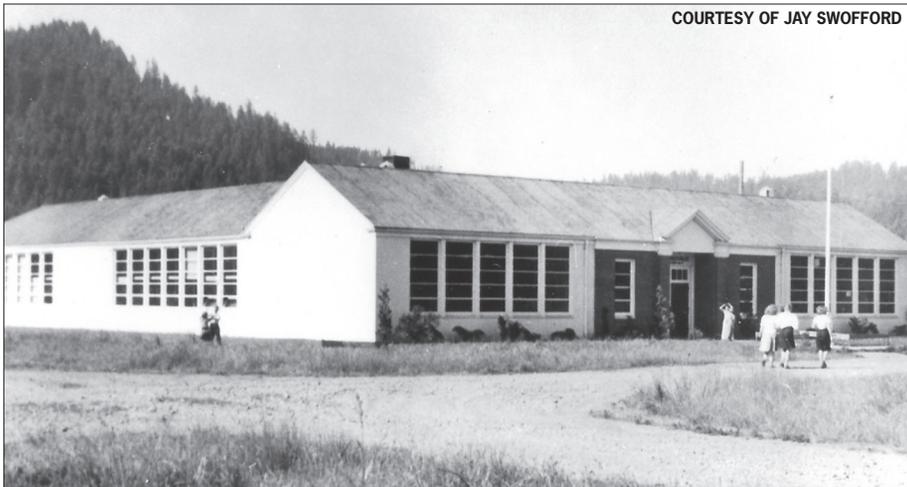
the gym had primarily served as a storage area in recent years and that they were informed the building had been condemned following the discovery of a fractured bowstring truss. School officials have said that a structural engineer advised closing the gym.

### Short history of the Crawfordsville School building

Schooling in Crawfordsville dates to the mid-19th century, with early rural schoolhouses serving the community long before the current campus took shape. Newspaper accounts report that the original Crawfordsville

School burned to the ground in November 1941, with only the gymnasium surviving the fire. Classes were temporarily held in the surviving gym.

In March 1942, several local school districts were consolidated, with Sweet Home designated as the area's only high school. Later that year, a new four-room Crawfordsville School was constructed. The campus was expanded again in 1948, when additional classrooms were added and a new gymnasium — the structure recently closed — was built.



COURTESY OF JAY SWOFFORD

Crawfordsville School, rebuilt after the 1941 fire and photographed before the 1948 gym addition. The brick facade visible here remains today.

Source note: Information is based on historic photographs, community accounts, and Sweet Home School District records, newspaper articles, and with research performed by Jay Swofford.

## Moon Missions and Math Classes: The Space Age Starts in School

By Jeff Brown, Staff Writer and Columnist

For parents worried about what comes after high school and for students who feel they are running out of time to choose a direction, the future can seem overwhelming. The growth of the space industry offers a different message. It is not about being too late but about building skills that are needed now and will remain essential for decades to come.

As NASA prepares to launch Artemis II in February 2026, the mission reflects a shift in how space exploration is conducted. While four astronauts will travel around the Moon, tens of thousands of people on Earth support missions like this every day. These roles are not limited to early planners or elite specialists. They include technicians, electricians, machinists, software developers, engineers, data analysts, and systems operators at every career stage.

Artemis II is part of a long-term effort to establish a sustained human presence on the Moon and prepare for future missions to Mars. That means demand for skilled workers is ongoing, not temporary. Space exploration is no longer a race to a single milestone. It is a continuing industry that will require new workers, retraining, and expanded education pathways year after year.

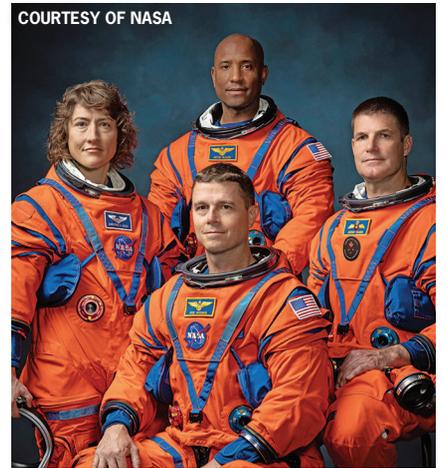
For today's high school juniors and seniors, this is not the end of the road. It is a starting point. Math and science skills can be strengthened at any stage through community colleges, technical programs, apprenticeships, military training, universities, and on-the-job learning. Many space-related careers do not require a four-year engineering degree. Some begin with certifications in electronics, manufacturing, computer systems, or robotics.

Parents may be reassured that these skills are not limited to space-related jobs. Training in math, science, and technology applies across a wide range of industries, including energy, transportation, healthcare technology, construction, and advanced manufacturing. Even students who later pursue a different career path will benefit from the analytical thinking and problem-solving abilities these subjects develop.

The space industry also values persistence and adaptability. Teams working on missions like Artemis II include people who entered the field at different ages and from diverse backgrounds. What matters most is the willingness to learn, update skills, and tackle complex challenges.

As Artemis II approaches launch, it sends a hopeful message. The space age is not a closed door for those already in high school. It is an open and expanding field that will continue to need skilled workers for years to come. For students and parents alike, investing in math and science now is not about catching up. It is about stepping into opportunities that are still being built.

**Editor's Note:** I attended Cal Young Middle School and Sheldon High School in Eugene with Jim Dutton, a reminder that careers in space often begin in ordinary classrooms. Dutton went on to become a U.S. Air Force test pilot before being selected by NASA in 2004. In 2010, he served as a mission specialist aboard Space Shuttle Discovery on STS-131, helping deliver critical supplies to the International Space Station. His career reflects the long-term value of strong foundations in math, science, and problem-solving.



COURTESY OF NASA

The four-member Artemis II crew poses for an official NASA portrait ahead of the first crewed lunar mission since Apollo, scheduled for early 2026.



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**PUZZLE KEY**

Puzzles on page 7

C	H	O	P		P	O	S	H		C	R	A	M		6	4	8	5	2	1	3	9	7	
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**Oregon Expands Online Voter Registration Access**

SALEM — Eligible Oregonians can now register to vote online using the last four digits of their Social Security number and an electronic signature, the Oregon Secretary of State’s Office announced.

Previously, online voter registration in Oregon was limited to residents with a driver’s license number. The change brings the state’s online system in line with its paper voter registration process and is required under House Bill 4133, passed in 2022, with an implementation deadline of Jan. 1, 2026.

“Everything in our modern society is evolving to be more convenient — our elections should do the same,” said

Tobias Read, in a statement. “Every citizen should get the same opportunity to hold their government accountable at the ballot box.”

State officials said the updated registration form maintains existing security measures. Elections officials will verify Social Security numbers and signatures submitted through the system before completing a registration, using the same process applied to paper forms.

To register to vote in Oregon, residents must be U.S. citizens, residents of the state, and at least 16 years old. Voters must be 18 by Election Day to cast a ballot.

More information is available at OregonVotes.gov. 🗳



**HEALTH & WELLNESS**

**Acupuncture and the Art of Self-Care**

By Lynlee Bischoff, Columnist

The Medical News defines self-care as “conscious participation in activities that promote healthy functioning and enhance a person’s well-being and quality of life. It helps reduce stress, boost self-confidence, and improve overall happiness.” Today, we are going to look at acupuncture as a tool in our “self-care” toolbox.

Acupuncture affects the flow of energy (called qi, pronounced “chee”) through 12 channels, or meridians, that run the length of the body. Acupuncture involves inserting extremely fine needles at specific points along the meridians. A related technique called acupressure substitutes deep pressure for needle insertion.

Techniques can vary by practitioner, but all acupuncture uses a holistic approach that addresses your specific issue while also addressing any larger systemic imbalances. This is why acupuncture is often

simulated acupuncture, or no acupuncture for osteoarthritis, headaches, or chronic pain in the back, neck, or shoulders. True acupuncture provided the greatest pain relief, and the benefits persisted for at least a year. A 2021 study in Advances in Therapy found that acupuncture can help with low back pain up to two years after treatment.”

Acupuncture is a powerful tool for your self-care toolbox. Having recently received a series of acupuncture sessions for neck pain that other therapies helped but did not eliminate, I



can attest to acupuncture’s effectiveness in reducing and then eliminating my pain and discomfort, in addition to leaving me feeling more grounded and relaxed, dare I say lighthearted and joyful.

Conscious participation. That’s what self-care is all about. Could

acupuncture play a role in your future quest for better health and well-being? Talk to your doctor, ask around for a recommendation, and then be sure to seek out only experienced and licensed acupuncturists. Make 2026 your year for whole-body well-being and peace. 🌿

acupuncture play a role in your future quest for better health and well-being? Talk to your doctor, ask around for a recommendation, and then be sure to seek out only experienced and licensed acupuncturists. Make 2026 your year for whole-body well-being and peace. 🌿

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BOOK REVIEW

**Auld Lang Syne**

By Nancy Diltz, Columnist

“Auld Lang Syne,” a poem by Robert Burns (1759–1796), reminds us to cherish and remember the past. The poem was later adapted into a song familiar to most people when ringing in the new year.

“Should auld acquaintance be forgot  
And never brought to mind?  
Should auld acquaintance be forgot and auld  
lang syne.

Chorus:

For auld lang syne, my dear,  
For auld lang syne  
We’ll take a cup o’ kindness yet,  
For auld lang syne ...”

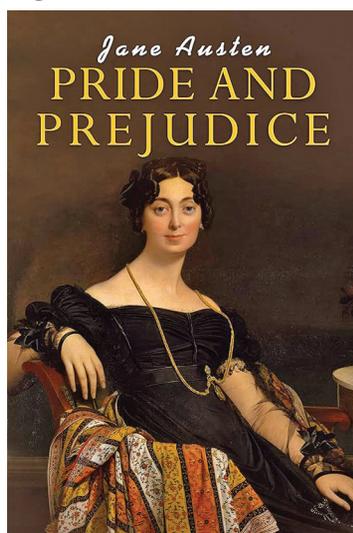
— Robert Burns



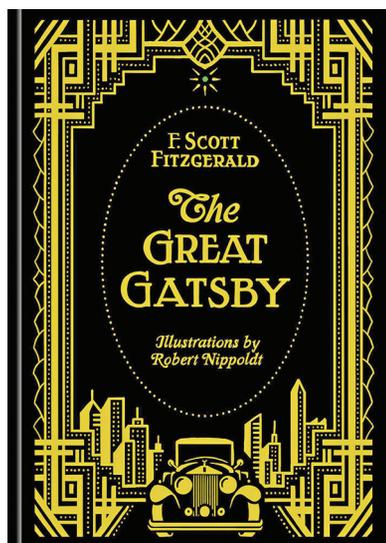
The rough translation of “Auld Lang Syne” is “old long since” or “for old time’s sake.” To speakers of the Scots language, it refers to “a shared past ...,” according to CBS News.

In the spirit of the new year and “Auld Lang Syne,” the books I would recommend at this time of year are classic works by major writers. Going back to an earlier time in history, looking at the world through the eyes of another, and perhaps revisiting a book once read for a school assignment, can bring new insights. A better understanding of a literary work of the past can lead to a better understanding of ourselves.

My choices this week are “Pride and Prejudice,” by Jane Austen, published in 1813 and set in rural England in the early 19th century, and “The Great Gatsby,” by F. Scott Fitzgerald, published in 1925 and set in New York in the early 1920s. If you have already read these selections,



you will be in for a treat by re-reading one or both classic books. They are both available in multiple film adaptations as well. Both books are available at the Brownsville Community Library. ☺



BROWNSVILLE LIBRARY

**Estate Planning Programs Offered in January**

By Sherri Lemhouse, Brownsville Librarian

The Brownsville Community Library will host two free estate-planning programs in January to help community members better understand important legal and health-care decisions.

The first program will focus on creating a will and will be held Thursday, Jan. 15, in the library’s Kirk Room. Local attorney Danielle M. Myers, joined by legal assistant Ms. Sam, will discuss the purpose of a will, common questions, and key considerations in estate planning. The presentation is intended to be accessible and informative, with time set aside for general questions.

A second program later in the month will cover advance directives and planning for future health care decisions. On Thursday, Jan. 22, Chaplain Wes Sedlacek will explain how advance directives work, including how to designate someone to speak on a patient’s behalf and how to document personal medical wishes. Participants will also have the opportunity to complete their own advance directive and learn about related topics, including quality of life and POLST forms.

Both programs are free and open to the public and will be held at the Brownsville Community Library, 146 Spaulding Ave. More info is available at <https://www.brownsvillecommunitylibrary.org> or by calling 541-466-5454. ☺

BROWNSVILLE LIBRARY CALENDAR

**Parents & Pals Story Time**

Wednesdays • 10–10:15 a.m.

A short story time followed by free play together.

**Brownsville Stitchery Group**

Wednesdays • 1–3 p.m.

Bring your project, have some fun — get things done!

**Songs, Rhymes & More Story Time**

Fridays • 11 a.m.

Story time with rhymes, songs, and a craft activity.

**Library Advisory Board Meeting**

Thursday, Jan. 8 • 4:30–5:30 p.m. • Kirk Room

Monthly meeting of the Brownsville Community Library Advisory Board. Open to the public.

**Estate Planning: Wills**

Thursday, Jan. 15 • 7–8 p.m. • Kirk Room

Learn the basics of estate planning with a focus on creating a will.

**Brownsville Book Club**

Thursday, Jan. 21 • 7 p.m. • Kirk Room

A friendly, informal discussion of the month’s selected book. New readers are always welcome.

**Estate Planning: Advance Directives**

Thursday, Jan. 22 • Noon–1 p.m. • Kirk Room

An informational program on advance directives and planning for future health care decisions.

CENTRAL LINN RECREATION ASSOCIATION

**Spring Registration Open Now**

Spring sports registration is now open through Jan. 31 for the Central Linn Recreation Association (CLRA).

Programs offered this season include:

- Pre-K and kindergarten T-ball
- Little League T-ball (second-year Pre-K and kindergarten)
- 1st–2nd grade coach pitch
- 2nd-grade Little League coach/player pitch
- 3rd–6th grade girls’ softball
- 3rd–8th grade JBO boys’ baseball

Registration details, timelines, and program-specific information are available at <https://www.clrasports.org/programs>

**Important note for baseball families:**

Updated policies and procedures apply only to 3rd–8th-grade Junior Baseball Organization (JBO). Registration does not guarantee team placement. Mandatory tryouts, team formation guidelines, and season timelines are outlined on the programs page at <https://www.clrasports.org/programs>. Families are encouraged to review this information carefully before registering.

For registration assistance or program questions, contact CLRA President Ashley at [president@clrasports.org](mailto:president@clrasports.org). ☺

CENTRAL LINN BOOSTER CLUB

**Cobra Booster Club Plans Fundraiser, Invites Community to January Meeting**

The Central Linn Cobra Booster Club is preparing for its annual dinner and auction, set for Saturday, March 14, 2026, at Central Linn High School. The event serves as the club’s primary fundraiser, supporting Central Linn athletic programs and student clubs through equipment purchases, uniforms, and program funding.

Community members interested in getting involved are encouraged to attend the next Cobra Booster Club meeting on Monday, Jan. 19, at 6 p.m. The meeting will be held in the Central Linn High School lobby and will focus on planning for the upcoming fundraiser and ways volunteers can help support student activities in the year ahead.

Central Linn High School is located at 32433 Hwy 228 in Halsey.

For more information, find the Cobra Booster Club on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/CobraBoosterClub> or email [cobra boosterclub@hotmail.com](mailto:cobra boosterclub@hotmail.com). ☺

WHERE TO STAY

# Pacific Power and Consumers Power Customers Should Prepare for Winter Outages

CENTRAL LINN COUNTY — As winter storms approach, local electric customers are urged to prepare for possible power interruptions.

Customers served by Pacific Power should know the company is closely monitoring forecast weather and crews are ready to respond to weather-related outages. Pacific Power encourages customers to update contact information, sign up for outage alerts, restock emergency kits and keep mobile devices charged. Outages can be reported by texting OUT to 722797 or calling 1-877-508-5088. Information on restoration estimates and outage status is available at <https://www.pacificpower.net/outages-safety.html>.

Customers served by Consumers Power Inc, the not-for-profit rural electric cooperative serving parts of Linn County, can report outages or sign up for notifications through their account or by calling 541-929-3124 or 800-872-9036 and pressing 1. Consumers Power also supports outage text alerts by texting "CPI" to 800-872-9036 after adding a phone number to their account.

During winter weather, customers of both utilities should stay clear of downed power lines and report emergencies to 911 as appropriate. ☼

## OREGON HEALTH PLAN

### Help Available for OHP Members During Severe Winter Weather

CORVALLIS — As severe winter weather brings extreme cold, windstorms, and power outages to the region, InterCommunity Health Network Coordinated Care Organization is reminding eligible Oregon Health Plan members in Central Linn County that assistance is available.

Through its Health-Related Social Needs (HRSN) Climate Services program, eligible members may receive support to help protect their health during extreme weather conditions. Available assistance can include portable heaters and backup power supplies for medical devices during power outages.

To qualify, members must not have received the same device within the past 36 months, be able to safely use the equipment in their residence, and live in a home or rental with family or friends, or in an RV with a reliable power source.

Applications are available online at <https://uniteus.com/networks/oregon/get-help/ihn-cco-hrsn>. More information about HRSN services is available at <https://ihntogether.org/transforming-health-care/health-related-social-needs>.

IHN-CCO serves Oregon Health Plan members throughout Linn County, including communities in Central Linn County. ☼

# Crypto and AI Are Driving Up the Price of Electricity — Here's Why It Matters

By Sharon K. Banks, Staff Writer and Columnist

The rapid growth of artificial intelligence and cryptocurrency is reshaping the global economy — and quietly driving up electricity demand. As data centers expand and Bitcoin mining continues worldwide, power grids are under increasing strain. That growing demand is contributing to higher electricity costs, infrastructure challenges, and renewed debate over energy policy.

## The Energy Demands of Crypto and AI

Both cryptocurrency mining and artificial intelligence rely on enormous computing power. Bitcoin, the most energy-intensive cryptocurrency, is created through a process called proof-of-work mining. This process requires specialized machines called ASICs that run continuously to solve complex mathematical problems, consuming large amounts of electricity around the clock.

Artificial intelligence places similar demands on power systems. Training and operating large AI models — including those used for language processing, image generation, and automation — requires data centers filled with high-performance GPUs and specialized processors. These chips consume substantial electricity and generate significant heat, necessitating energy-intensive cooling.

A 2023 report from the International Energy Agency estimated that global data center electricity use could more than double by 2026, with AI as a major driver. In the United States, data centers already account for more than 2 percent of total electricity consumption, and that share continues to rise.

## Ripple Effects on the Grid and Pricing

The electricity demand from crypto mining and AI does not occur in isolation. It competes directly with residential, commercial, and industrial users, particularly in regions with limited generation capacity or aging infrastructure.

States such as Texas have attracted large numbers of crypto miners because of relatively low energy costs and flexible regulations. Utilities in Texas and parts of the Midwest have reported increased grid stress and sharp spikes in demand. During peak periods, this can force utilities to rely on more expensive and less efficient power sources, which can increase costs across the system.

Over time, utilities may need to invest in new power plants, transmission lines, and grid upgrades to meet this demand. These capital costs are often passed on to customers through higher electricity rates.

## Environmental and Policy Concerns

Much of the electricity powering crypto mining and data centers still comes from fossil fuels, raising concerns about carbon emissions. While some operators are investing in renewable energy, growth often outpaces clean-energy adoption.

In response, regulators are paying closer attention. In 2024, the U.S. Energy Information Administration began requiring large cryptocurrency miners to report their electricity use. European regulators are also exploring stricter reporting and efficiency standards for data centers.

## A Growing Energy Reckoning

AI and cryptocurrency are among the most transformative technologies of the decade, but their energy footprint is becoming impossible to ignore. Without investments in grid modernization, renewable energy, and efficiency standards, the financial burden may increasingly fall on everyday consumers.

The cost of the digital boom may ultimately be measured not just in data or dollars — but in kilowatts. ☼

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**SHERIFF'S REPORT**

Information in the Sheriff's Report is provided by The Linn County Sheriff's Daily Media Log of Dispatched Calls and Cases. Incident details may be limited or delayed depending on agency availability prior to our weekly publication deadline. Addresses typically reflect the location of the incident or arrest, though in some cases they may indicate the origin of the call.

An individual's arrest or citation reported here does not imply guilt. Guilt or innocence is determined only through the judicial process.

The following is a list of abbreviations that may appear in our log reports: LCSO (Linn County Sheriff's Office); OSP (Oregon State Police); APS (Adult Protective Services); DHS (Department of Human Services); LCCC (Linn County Circuit Court); LCJC (Linn County Justice 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).

**Monday, Dec. 29**

8:14 a.m. — Yesenia Munguia, 27, of Keizer, was cited for driving uninsured at NW 2nd St/American Dr., Halsey.

8:32 a.m. — LCSO Civil Division conducted an eviction lockout in the 31900 block of North Lake Creek Dr., Tangent. The property was posted and turned over to the lawful representative.

1:29 p.m. — While a deputy was at a place of business in the 300 block of W 2nd St., Halsey, a verbal disagreement occurred over a civil matter involving ice cream. The parties involved cooled down and resolved the matter civilly; no crimes were observed.

3:36 p.m. — Linn County Sheriff's Office received an Adult Protective Services cross report regarding concerns involving a vulnerable adult in the 500 block of Averill St., Brownsville. The concerns in the report are under investigation.

10:27 p.m. — Samuel Tuner-Lynch, 37, of Albany,

was issued traffic citations for failure to obey a traffic control device in the 28200 block of Hwy 99E, Halsey, and speeding 80 mph in a 55 mph zone while traveling northbound.

11:59 p.m. — Alyx Cunningham, 21, of Brownsville, was issued a traffic citation for failure to obey a traffic control device in the 31900 block of Hwy 228, Halsey.

**Tuesday, Dec. 30**

7:19 a.m. — Corey Staley, 39, of Harrisburg, was cited for speeding in the 21400 block of Powerline Rd., Harrisburg.

7:56 a.m. — Michael Wilcox, 52, of Harrisburg, was cited for traveling 77 mph in a 55 mph zone in the 21800 block of Powerline Rd., Harrisburg.

8:57 a.m. — A deputy on routine patrol observed two hunters shooting ducks while the boat they were on was under power in the 100 block of N 1st St., Harrisburg. Oregon State Police assisted, and both males were cited at the boat ramp.

4:49 p.m. — Keeley Crowson, 31, of Harrisburg, was cited for driving with a suspended license, driving uninsured and failure to renew vehicle registration at LaSalle/S 6th St., Harrisburg.

7:04 p.m. — A deputy cited Stephanie Ryan, 42, of Harrisburg, for disorderly conduct II for promoting a fight between her juvenile daughter and a classmate in the 800 block of Sommerville Loop, Harrisburg. Report taken.

10:18 p.m. — Dhylan Watson, 25, of Harrisburg, was issued a citation in lieu of custody for driving while suspended and failure to obey a traffic control device in the 30500 block of Tosta Rd./Coburg Rd., Harrisburg.

**Wednesday, Dec. 31**

7:45 a.m. — Aaron Connell, 44, of Monroe, was cited for traveling 74 mph in a 55 mph zone and warned for sev-

eral equipment violations at Coburg Rd./Stroda Dr., Harrisburg.

8:43 a.m. — Joshua King, 18, of Harrisburg, was cited for traveling 76 mph in a 55 mph zone and warned for several equipment violations in the 21400 block of Coburg Rd., Harrisburg.

10:41 a.m. — A caller reported a minor sharing intimate images of another minor in the 500 block of Kesling St., Harrisburg. Investigation ongoing; report taken.

2:49 p.m. — Peter Grossniclaus, 66, of Halsey, was arrested for DUII and reckless driving in the 200 block of N 3rd St., Harrisburg.

3:30 p.m. — Anna House, 41, was arrested for criminal trespass II in the 400 block of N Main St., Brownsville. Report taken.

7:01 p.m. — A caller requested a trespass of a female who continues to cause issues at the Brownsville Saloon, 400 Main St., Brownsville.

7:43 p.m. — A caller reported an armed disturbance in the 25100 block of Little Valley Ln., Brownsville. Caleb Thorne, 22, of Brownsville, was arrested for reckless endangerment and menacing. Report taken.

9:53 p.m. — Eneki Lokela Trujillo, 25, of Brownsville, was arrested for an outstanding warrant in the 25100 block of Little Valley Ln., Brownsville. Trujillo was transported and lodged at the Linn County Jail without incident and received a criminal citation for giving false information to police. Report taken.

**Thursday, Jan. 1**

7:09 a.m. — Deputies responded to a medical assist for another agency. A welfare check was completed on two juveniles in the 32000 block of Birdfoot Dr., Tangent. Information was documented and forwarded to DHS.

**Friday, Jan. 2**

7:57 a.m. — A deputy observed an injured owl near the roadway in the 31000 block of Hwy 99E, Shedd. The deputy and citizens gathered materials to aid in transporting the owl to a local rehabilitation facility.

2:03 p.m. — Deputies observed a lamb outside a fence and returned it to its pasture in the 29100 block of Hwy 99E, Shedd.

2:08 p.m. — Deputies responded to a civil dispute involving property belonging to a recently deceased individual in the 600 block of Territorial St., Harrisburg.

2:21 p.m. — A caller reported a loose sheep in the 33100 block of Tangent Dr., Tangent. A deputy returned the sheep to the field; the owners arrived to repair the fence.

5:49 p.m. — A caller reported a neighbor was assaulted in the 32900 block of Diamond Hill Dr., Harrisburg. Deputies investigated and collected statements. Investigation ongoing; report taken.

**Saturday, Jan. 3**

7:13 a.m. — A caller reported littering in the 32700 block of Tangent Loop, Tangent. Four mattresses were dumped in the north ditch. No identifying information was found. The report was forwarded to the Linn County Road Department for removal.

1:40 p.m. — A caller reported loose dogs at Pioneer Park, Brownsville. Deputies warned parkgoers about unleashed dogs.

2:22 p.m. — Deputies responded to a third-party call in the 30100 block of Brownsville Rd./Sand Ridge Rd., Brownsville, regarding concern for a female possibly in danger. Deputies located the vehicle in the Lebanon area and determined no crimes had occurred. Parties were released. NFA.

2:32 p.m. — A caller reported a suicidal subject in the 40900 block of Hwy 228, Sweet Home. A female

was threatening self-harm with an unloaded firearm. Deputies determined the incident stemmed from a sibling dispute. No suicidal or homicidal ideations were identified. Access to firearms was removed, and resources and coping strategies were provided.

4:01 p.m. — D. Braywick, 34, of Junction City, received a traffic citation for failure to obey a traffic control device in the 000 block of American Dr., Halsey.

4:22 p.m. — Kolby Dean Peterson, 31, of Lebanon, was cited for traveling 52 mph in a 35 mph zone at E Bishop Way/Hume St., Brownsville.

4:24 p.m. — A caller reported phone harassment in the 600 block of Territorial St., Harrisburg. A deputy spoke with the caller regarding an ongoing civil matter involving property and a will.

5:59 p.m. — A caller reported a tote designed to catch cars left on private property in the 33700 block of Hwy 228, Halsey. The owner agreed to remove the item.

**Sunday, Jan. 4**

5:56 a.m. — Bryant O'Neil Pires, 34, of Lebanon, was issued citations for failure to obey a traffic control device and driving uninsured at Seven Mile Ln./Harrison Rd., Brownsville.

11:32 a.m. — A caller reported a mental health episode in the 38200 block of Crawfordville Dr., Sweet Home. A deputy explained available resources to the individual's significant other.

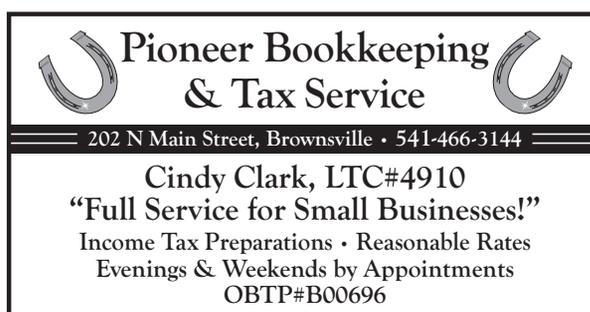
10:57 a.m. — Miranda Autumn Desantis, 50, of Brownsville was cited for speeding 76 mph in a 55 mph zone and driving with out privileges in the 33300 block of Hwy 228, Halsey.

6:58 p.m. — Jenna Mahaffey, 31, of Albany was arrested for assault IV domestic violence and criminal mischief I in the 31800 block of Begonia Ln, Tangent. Report taken. ☺

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**LADY** *continued from page 2*

Lady Sofia the Poodle also represents a long-standing tradition at the Albany Carousel. Every character on the carousel has been carved and painted in-house over the years by dedicated volunteers and artists, making each animal a one-of-a-kind creation with its own story.

The most anticipated moment is still ahead. Lady Sofia the Poodle will be officially unveiled once she is mounted on the carousel during a public celebration on January 17, 2026. Former carousel workers and sponsors will be the first to ride Lady Sofia the Poodle at 10:30 a.m., before rides open to the public. The public unveiling begins at 11 a.m.

All the artists involved in her creation, including Jack Giles and Pete



JEFF BROWN

A carved orange cat clings playfully to Lady Sofia's saddle, one of several hidden details added by carousel artists to give each animal a unique personality.

Slenning, are expected to attend the event. Cake will be served, and special merchandise will be available to commemorate the new character's addition.

Lady Sofia the Poodle becomes the 46th animal on the carousel, which has a maximum capacity of 51. The Historic Carousel and Museum is located at 503 1st Ave W in Albany, Oregon, and is open daily from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. The Albany Carousel remains one of a kind and a point of pride for the Willamette Valley. 🌟

**LETTER FROM THE EDITOR**

**Why Your Survey Matters**

*By Mikayle Stole, Editor*

At The Brownsville Times, our role is to report the news, document the life of our towns, and serve as a trusted source of public information for Brownsville, Halsey, Shedd, Tangent, Crawfordville, and Harrisburg. But none of that can be done well without listening to the people we serve. That is why we launched the Brownsville Times Community Survey.

Your responses give us something more meaningful than guesses or assumptions. They tell us how you read the paper, which topics matter most to you, how useful our coverage is to your daily life, and where we can improve. That information directly shapes what we publish.

When readers tell us that local government reporting, school news, and community announcements are priorities, we use that guidance to focus our volunteer writer's efforts. When readers share ideas for new coverage or note areas that feel overrepresented, we listen. This survey allows us to better align our reporting with the needs of our community. Your participation also plays a vital role in keeping local journalism alive.

As a nonprofit 501(c)(3) community newspaper, The Brownsville Times relies not only on subscriptions and advertising but also on grants and community support to cover printing and distribution costs. Grant funders want to know that their support is making a measurable difference. Your survey responses provide that proof. When readers report that our coverage is relevant, easy to understand, and valuable to their lives, those results become part of the data we share with funders to demonstrate community impact.

In simple terms, your feedback helps us tell the story of why this newspaper matters — and why it is worth sustaining.

If you have already taken the survey, thank you. Your voice is helping guide the future of this newspaper. If you have not yet had the chance, we invite you to participate by visiting <https://brownsvilletimes.org/survey>.

Every response helps us better serve you, strengthen our newsroom, and ensure that local news remains accessible and community-focused. 🌟

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