

# Mitchell Sentinel

Fearless, Fair and Free

Mitchell, Wheeler County, Oregon, Wednesday, January 21, 2026, Issue #39

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If anyone needs  
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## “Oregon System” Sends Governor back to square one

By Cascade Policy Institute | Monday January 12, 2026

by Naomi Inman

The final signatures were plunked down on December 30—down on the Secretary of State’s desk. It was a slam dunk for the Oregon System.

In less than 50 days, a quarter-million Oregon voters lined up in every county to sign the “Stop the Gas Tax” petition (2025-302) and refer Governor Tina Kotek’s \$4.3 billion hike on gas, wages, and transportation (HB 3991) to the voters in November 2026.

For weeks, we watched 250,000 voters participate in the “Oregon System,” a form of direct democracy established in 1902, giving voters the right to challenge laws passed by the legislature. Since then, Oregon voters have voted on nearly 70 veto referendums and repealed 42 targeted laws.

Nick Stark, executive director of the Oregon Freedom Coalition, told Cascade, “The chief petitioners turned in nearly enough signatures to qualify for a constitutional referendum—a very high bar. Although it isn’t a constitutional referendum this time, these numbers signal we are capable of qualifying for constitutional amendments in the future.”

The record-breaking signature drive was a shrill signal to legislators that Oregon’s voters are up for any future challenge—especially any challenges during the five-week session beginning in February.

Today, on January 7, Governor Tina Kotek called for lawmakers to “redirect, repeal, and rebuild” the beleaguered transportation bill, which would have made a poor running mate in November. She gave Republican leaders a backhanded compliment in her speech to the Oregon Transportation Forum by admitting that, “thousands of Oregonians across the state have made their point, and we need to move in a new direction.” As designed, the Oregon System earned the Governor’s attention.

On the heels of her announcement, Stark responded, “The governor’s announcement is an admission of failure on their part. A full repeal is not the best answer. It would gut the good parts of the bill, re-institute tolling, and take out the audit of ODOT. It is now incumbent on the majority to come to the table and negotiate.”

The Governor and her supermajority are back to where they started one year ago, unable to govern and unable to carry out government’s most basic functions: to maintain roads, bridges, and highways, to fix potholes and de-ice the streets. It’s the stuff all of us need and care about.

For decades now, Oregon has given Kotek and her predecessors everything she wanted—all the votes and all the money. Yet the lack of imagination in spending solutions and the narrow fixation on collecting more taxes result in a mindset where nothing can be done unless voters pay more for less—more for gas taxes, more for fees, more for dying transit, and more for fewer roads and fewer lanes for cars in the name of “multi-modal transportation.”

While New York City’s newly elected socialist mayor, Zohran Mamdani, touts the “warmth of

(cont’d on page 2)



(cont'd from page 1 - Oregon System)

collectivist action"—taxpayers in Oregon were nearly condemned to the bitter cold gulag of never-ending tax increases and service decreases. Until a quarter-million voters decided to light a fire, ignited by the spark of individual freedom and democracy. ■



Naomi Inman is External Relations Manager at Cascade Policy Institute, Oregon's free-market public policy research organization. As a staff journalist and writer, Naomi helps

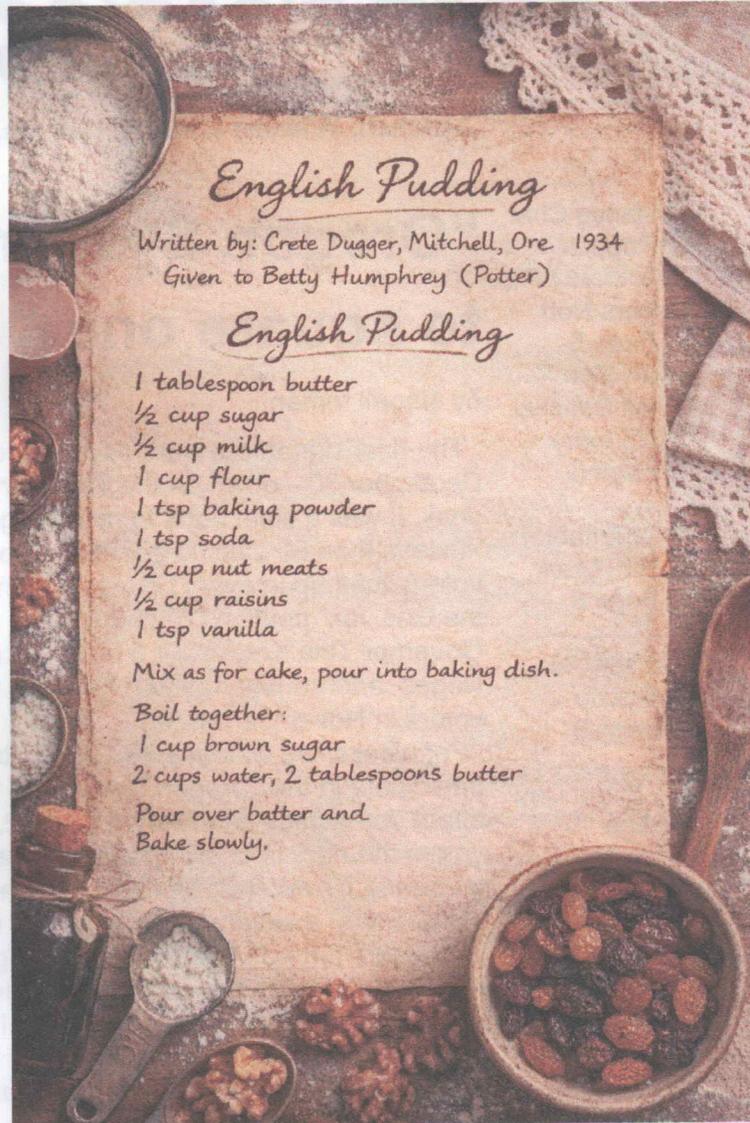
Cascade make the case for free-market policies through media affairs and publications.

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This recipe for English Pudding was shared by Glenna Fay Lange -



# Mitchell Ambulance Chat

January 2026

Hello and welcome to this month's edition of the Mitchell Ambulance Chat!! I hope everyone one of you had a wonderful holiday season and enjoyed time with friends and family.

Emergency medical services are an extremely important service here in Wheeler County, not only for the locals but for the large number of tourists who visit our beautiful county. There are 3 ambulance services spread out across the county. Mitchell, Fossil, and Spray each have ambulance services that cover large service areas, and we have mutual aid agreements with each other to cover calls in other service areas as needed. Fossil Ambulance has not been operational for some time due to the retirement of their EMTs, and Spray Ambulance has been covering calls in Fossil as well as their own service area. We have covered calls in Spray and Fossil as well when one or the other services are unavailable. The response times are increased significantly when an outside agency responds to a call out of their normal service area, and the time waiting for medical help can be very detrimental to patient outcomes. Prompt medical attention is required when serious illnesses or injuries occur. If you live in Mitchell and the ambulance is coming from Spray, you may not receive medical attention in time to make a difference!!

There has been a decline nationwide in volunteers for rural ambulance services, and Wheeler County is no exception. Becoming an EMT has changed considerably over the years. The minimum time required to finish schooling is approximately 6 months of textbook learning, lectures, and tests, followed by a National Registry Test and state licensing. EMTs have a tremendous responsibility on their shoulders every time they go out on a call; patients survival depends on their quick thinking and actions at times!! They must be able

to quickly size up the situation and identify and treat the biggest life threats and arrange for advanced medical care, whether it be a helicopter transport or an intercept with a paramedic-staffed ambulance. They have to keep a cool head and clear thought process in the face of horrible injuries and patients in severe pain. All volunteer EMTs do this for free because we care about you!! We come into your lives at your worst moments and do our best to make things better for you!!

We have a shortage of licensed EMTs everywhere in the county, as well as here in Mitchell. There are various solutions being proposed in several different groups to address this problem, but in the end, it boils down to a lack of volunteers willing to put in the time required. We have to find a way to encourage participation in this vital service. All 3 ambulance services offer paid tuition to cover the training costs involved with becoming an EMT. We need good people to step up and make a difference in their communities!!

I can tell you from my own personal experience that becoming an EMT was well worth all of the studying and testing. Making a difference in people's lives and saving lives is the most rewarding thing I've ever done!! Think about signing up to become an EMT and become a first responder, nothing else you can do will have such an impact in your community or will give you such pride and satisfaction!!

Have a safe month, everyone, and remember that we're always here for you whenever you need us!!! ■

*John A. Hayes, EMT - Mitchell Ambulance*



## AMBULANCE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED



TRAINING PROVIDED

CONTACT YOUR LOCAL AMBULANCE FOR MORE INFO

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<b>SPRAY</b>	(541) 468-2086
<b>MITCHELL</b>	(541) 462-3043

# Oregon DMV introduces priority scheduling for drive tests to customers in rural counties

Jan. 2, 2026

SALEM – Oregon DMV now gives local preference to rural customers scheduling behind-the-wheel drive tests for Class C driver licenses, the basic license for passenger cars.

As of Jan. 1, Senate Bill 9 requires DMV field offices in 20 rural counties to give priority to applicants who live within the same county, live within 50 miles of a DMV field office, or live in one of two counties without a DMV office.

"Giving local preference will improve the drive test process for people who live in less populated areas," said Oregon DMV Administrator Amy Joyce. "Rural county offices serve large geographic areas for all DMV transaction types. Customers in those counties can face challenges getting a driver's license due to the limited number of drive tests offered in their area, combined with the fact that customers from across Oregon sometimes come to those locations for a test."

## Who does this bill impact?

The bill helps customers living in Baker, Clatsop, Crook, Curry, Gilliam, Grant, Harney, Hood River, Jefferson, Klamath, Lake, Malheur, Morrow, Sherman, Tillamook, Umatilla, Union, Wallowa, Wasco, and Wheeler counties. DMV does not offer drive tests in Gilliam, Morrow, Sherman or Wheeler counties. Customers in those counties can schedule a local-preference drive test at any rural DMV office that offers the service.

## How can rural customers schedule local preference

DMV will offer rural customers three different options to schedule local preference Class C drive tests:

1. At their local DMV office through the lobby check-in kiosk. The kiosk will only display and

2. allow scheduling of drive test appointments for the office the customer is physically at.
3. Scheduling with an employee at the DMV office.
4. Calling Customer Assistance at 503-945-5000. Customer Assistance will verify the customer lives in one of the 20 counties before making the appointment.

Senate Bill 9 does not affect drive test appointments made on DMV2U, which are provided on a first-come, first-served basis. Customers who don't live in a rural county should continue to use DMV2U or call Customer Assistance to schedule drive test appointments or schedule with a third-party tester. Visit [oregondmv.com](http://oregondmv.com) for a list of certified Class C testers. ■

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## Lovers Nob

When I was about 10 years old or so, I started hearing buzzing about the birds and the bees. I could have cared less. I wanted to hear about the girls! The older boys and the gossipers were always talking of a place called Lovers Nob. It didn't take me long to find said location. Though it would be eight years before I could put the nob to use. First, I had to procure a car, license, and then a cooperating girl, all very hard tasks.

Through the years, I have heard stories about happenings on Lovers Nob, and it's hard to figure fact from fiction, braggart from bull. It is a very scenic place, but scenes change after it gets dark, and usually you could see cars parked late into night.

Factually, there was a car there one night, and when they decided to go home, they had no headlights. Two culprits crawled up and removed their seal beams while they were distracted. Later, the same couple were more aware as the two culprits clanked their wrenches before they could remove the drive line. The car sped off at a high rate of speed. The culprits were very lucky they were not dragged or ran over. Rarely did you see more than one car park there. It was proper edict; if occupied, you move on to your backup spot.

By writing about Lovers Nob, maybe I can stimulate memories of happenings that took place there. These could trigger lies, broken promises, along with the positive happenings. This local spot had other names other than Lovers Nob, but in keeping with family values, I have not included them.

This property was owned by Dollarhide, now by the Hashknife Ranch, next to the Cole Road. Cole Brothers mined gravel off the top to gravel their road with pea gravel. The mining did not interfere with the other use. What killed that use was a house and shop being built next to the Nob. Couples quit using vehicles for said adventures and found other venues to fit their purpose. The road and tracks have long faded as Lovers Nob takes its place in history. ■

— Dan Cannon  
12/17/25

**P.S.** If anyone has more stories about the Nob,  
please contact Dan.

He would like a complete history.

## MITCHELL BAPTIST CHURCH



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# A Look Back through the Mitchell Sentinel 2025

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# The Powder Buoy Says... Snow?

*A Fun Forecast from the Pacific Ocean*

By the Mitchell Sentinel | January 14, 2026

Winter has been a little stingy this year. Not much rain. Not much snow. Not much of anything falling from the sky — and folks around Mitchell are starting to notice. So when a snowboarder casually mentioned that “the Powder Buoy says we might get a storm in about ten days,” it made us curious. The *what* buoy?

## Meet the Powder Buoy

Despite sounding like something dreamed up in a ski lodge after a long day on the slopes, the **Powder Buoy is real** — and it's owned and operated by none other than **NOAA**, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Out in the Pacific Ocean, near Hawaii, NOAA maintains massive weather buoys that constantly measure:

- Wave height
- Wind speed
- Atmospheric pressure

When those buoys suddenly show **big wave spikes**, it usually means a powerful storm system is charging across the Pacific. Snowboarders and skiers have learned over the years that when the ocean gets angry out there... **weather often follows inland about a week to two weeks later**. Hence the saying: “When the Powder Buoy pops — snow is coming.”

## Is This Official Science? Sort of. Is It Fun? Absolutely.

Let's be clear — NOAA does **not** issue snow forecasts for Mitchell based on this buoy alone. This is not a guarantee, and it's certainly not a promise.

But here's the fun part: **Over the years, the Powder Buoy has built a surprisingly good reputation** among snow lovers for *hinting* at upcoming storm cycles.

It doesn't predict:

- Where the storm will land
- How cold it will be
- Whether the mountains get snow, rain, or just dramatic clouds

But it *does* signal when the Pacific is waking up — and after a quiet winter, that alone is enough to spark some hope.

## Why Folks Are Paying Attention This Year

This isn't just about skiing and snowboarding.

For Mitchell:

- Mountain snowpack feeds our reservoirs
- Reservoirs feed our water table
- Our water table feeds ranching, livelihoods, and summer survival

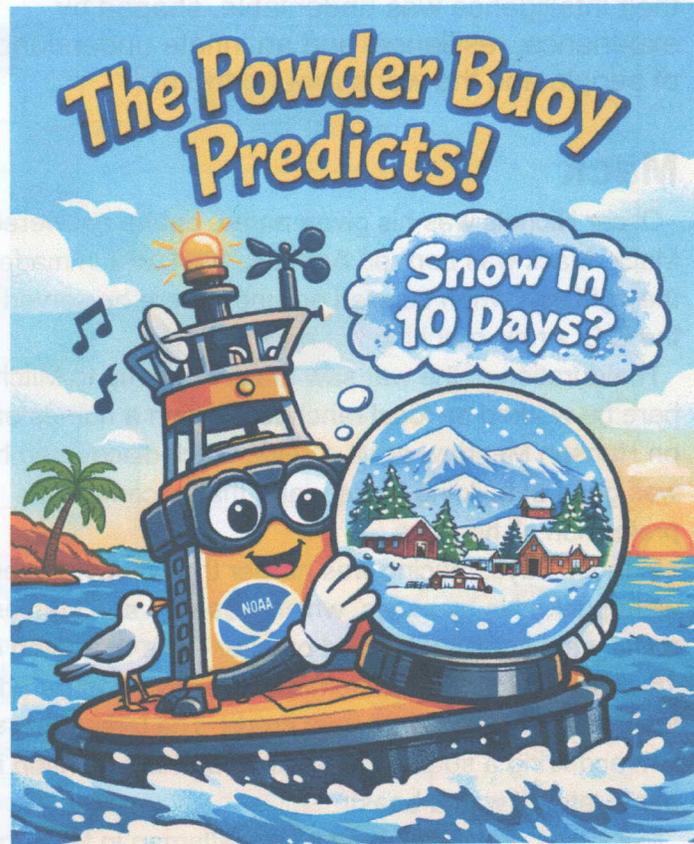
So when winter stays dry, people start watching *everything* — forecasts, clouds, wind, and yes... even buoys bobbing in the Pacific Ocean.

## So... Are We Getting Snow in 10 Days?

The honest answer: **Maybe**. The fun answer: **The Powder Buoy says there's a chance**.

And after weeks of dry weather, a “maybe” from the Pacific feels a whole lot better than nothing at all.

So keep an eye on the sky, dust off the snow shovels (just in case), and enjoy the idea that somewhere out there, a NOAA buoy is rocking back and forth in big ocean waves — quietly whispering to snowboarders, ranchers, and weather-watchers alike: “Something might be coming.” ■



## Unforgettable Folks: The Legends Next Door

In this series, I've introduced you to several interesting folks I've been fortunate enough to know. These individuals, full of wisdom and personality, left an impression on me that hasn't faded with time. They weren't scholars in the traditional sense, but their intelligence was undeniable, shaped by experience, resilience, and an innate understanding of people and the world around them.

### Mack

Oscar Nichols was his given name, but he answered to Mack. Mack was born on April 28, 1894, which made him the right age when I cycled around, where he served in the U.S. Army, reaching the rank of Sgt.

The duration of the war saw Mack returning to Mitchell, here he worked on local ranches, filed on a homestead on Hanson Meadow at Mt. Creek. Mack discovered he was good at building fences, and that became his profession all his days.

In those days, fencing was harder than today; materials were packed in by mules, which was wire and staples, posts were supplied by God on site. Tools consisted of a 16-pound post maul, stretcher, pliers, and, compared to tools of today, they were very crude. The later years saw him acquiring a surplus command car, I will mention it again later; it was a beast!

Mack was proving himself as a craftsman in fencing, but he was proving he had a problem with alcohol, which followed him to the grave. Mack would partake in all spirits, but his go-to was wine. "Today is ok, that's what all wino's say" was his go-to slogan.

Then he added, why don't they call whiskey drinkers whiskey o's? Mack was using our restroom, through thin walls, I heard him say to his man region, "We came into this world together, but I sure out-lived you." He was sharing wisdom that all men will face one day.

He told me he was coming down and wanted to sober up. He was living in a cabin on Pine Creek near Antone. As he lay in bed, he kept hearing the ticking of his clock; it seemed to say get drunk – get drunk – get drunk. Finally, he got up, opened the oven door, and placed that noisy clock inside. Problem solved!

Mack reached 65, was going to retire, went to the social office to start his checks. In all his 65 years, Mack Nicholas had never had a driver's license or an I.D. He applied, tested, and finally got his new driver's license, and two weeks later, got his first DWI. To my knowledge,

that was his first and last license.

Back to the command car, Mack had two grandsons, Rick and Fred, who were about the age of having all the answers but didn't know the questions. When Mack wasn't using the car, which was a 4x4 that could follow a mountain goat, they were. Everything was functional on it except the brakes, which added to the adventure.

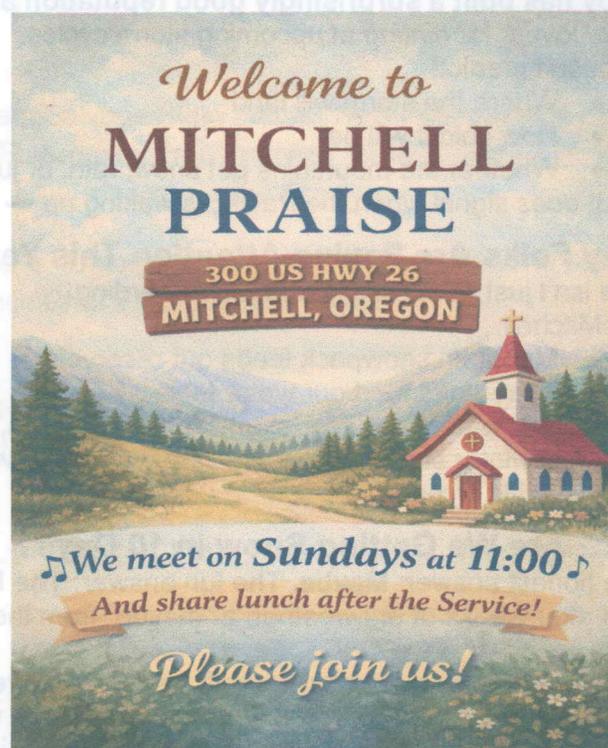
Fred was driving when we slid off the county road by Lewis Rock. It took the better part of two days to get back on the road. The brake problem reared its ugly head again on the north side of Keyes Mountain, while traversing said mountain, brakes were applied by using a 18 in diameter juniper tree. Now this problem became compounded when brakes need to be removed, the tree had to be cut off, which defined the car would be free-wheeling over the remover. Such things must be blotted out of one's memory because I only remember we got the car off the mountain.

One of my last memories of Mack was Kent Powell had a 1968 Camaro, which son Bob liked to hot rod. A few days before, Mack told Kent that black strip on the street belonged to him. Bob had spun out the tires on Kent's Camaro!

Mack passed through his last gate in the fence September 12, 1973, and he did it sober! Amen! ■

*Dan Cannon*

11/17/25



Community Advertisement

# Crossword no.39

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
14						15					16			
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55					56	57	58				59	60	61	62
63					64					65				
66					67					68				
69					70					71				

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**ACROSS**

- 1. Female red deer (plural)
- 6. Plunk
- 10. Pouches
- 14. Model of excellence
- 15. Feeble or crippled
- 16. Story
- 17. Rental agreement
- 18. Affirm
- 19. Dry or parched
- 20. Frogs, for example
- 22. Not short
- 23. Bowel
- 24. A citrus fruit
- 26. An ancient Greek poetess
- 30. Cone-like
- 32. A hardy cabbage
- 33. Shout
- 35. Shop
- 39. Positive electrode
- 41. Writer/poet Edgar Allan \_\_\_\_ (1809-1849)
- 42. A northern sea duck
- 43. An Asian pepper plant
- 44. Grandson of Adam (Bible)
- 46. Infants
- 47. Having a smooth or gleaming surface
- 49. Strongly opposed
- 51. Merry

54. \_\_\_\_ de Janeiro, Brazil

- 55. Wing-shaped
- 56. Nullify
- 63. Hawaiian island
- 64. Actor \_\_\_\_ Connery
- 65. Hot chocolate
- 66. Sicilian volcano
- 67. Stop
- 68. Mistake
- 69. College administrator
- 70. God of war (Greek mythology)
- 71. Fragrance

**DOWN**

- 1. Anagram of "Hail"
- 2. Something previously mentioned
- 3. Tongue of a wagon
- 4. A quick run
- 5. Sled
- 6. Braid
- 7. Molten rock
- 8. Portent
- 9. Individual
- 10. A piece of carbonate hanging from a cave roof
- 11. Brother of Moses
- 12. Hold on tenaciously
- 13. A swamp plant
- 21. Shipping marker
- 25. Move upward
- 26. Forms on a wound
- 27. A1
- 28. Plan secretly
- 29. Walker
- 30. Heavy sound of impact
- 31. Margarine
- 34. Sword
- 36. Smell
- 37. Drenches
- 38. Gaelic
- 40. Singer \_\_\_\_ Fitzgerald
- 45. Travel in a wind-driven boat
- 48. An Old Testament prophet
- 50. People speaking
- 51. Renown
- 52. Fill with high spirits

53. Finnish steam bath

- 54. Raves
- 57. Close by
- 58. Valley
- 59. Dormitory (abbrev.)
- 60. Anagram of "Care"
- 61. Implement
- 62. Anagram of "Real"

The Crossword Puzzle Solution can be found on page 11

## Molly Blann Day

Molly Blann Day, the youngest daughter of Ray and Mabel Blann, was raised on Mountain Creek just over the crest of Keyes Summit. Molly attended Mountain Creek School until the 8th grade, she finished at Mitchell High School upon graduating in 1956. Molly married Eugene Troy Day. They moved to Heppner, Oregon, where he worked for Kinzua Lumber until his retirement. Gene passed and Molly now lives in Pendleton, where she just turned 86 this year. I established contact with Molly through Glenna Lange after Glenna gave me some of Molly's poems. Molly graciously consented to let us share her poems. Molly was also a gifted painter and piano player, but better still, a greater Christian.

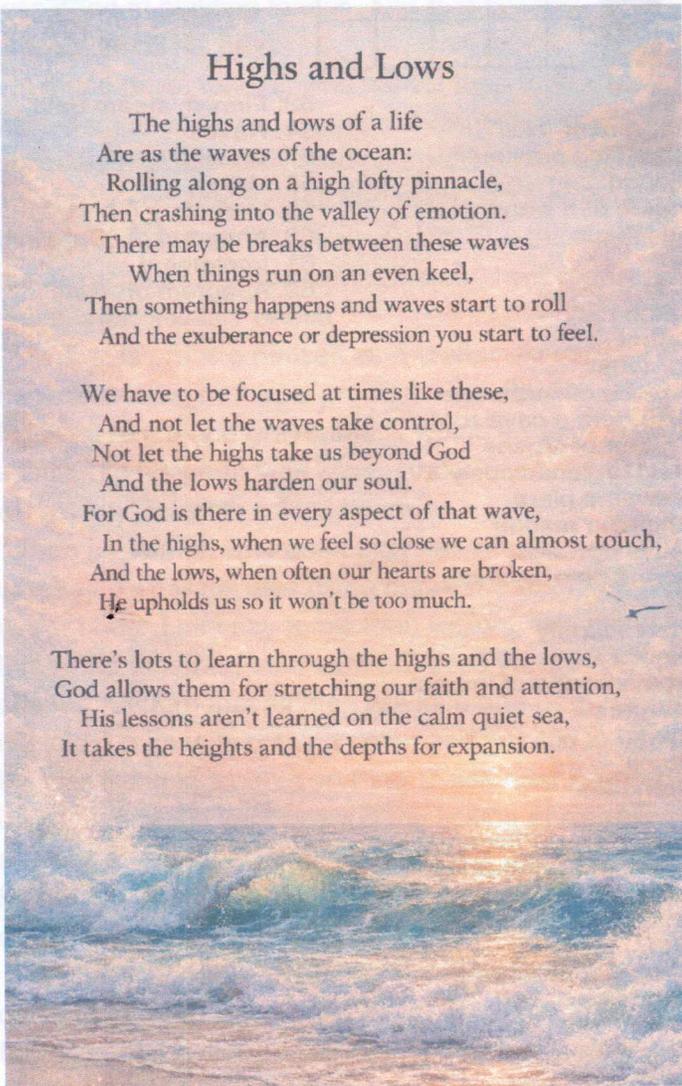
- Dan Cannon  
12/16/25

### Highs and Lows

The highs and lows of a life  
Are as the waves of the ocean:  
Rolling along on a high lofty pinnacle,  
Then crashing into the valley of emotion.  
There may be breaks between these waves  
When things run on an even keel,  
Then something happens and waves start to roll  
And the exuberance or depression you start to feel.

We have to be focused at times like these,  
And not let the waves take control,  
Not let the highs take us beyond God  
And the lows harden our soul.  
For God is there in every aspect of that wave,  
In the highs, when we feel so close we can almost touch,  
And the lows, when often our hearts are broken,  
He upholds us so it won't be too much.

There's lots to learn through the highs and the lows,  
God allows them for stretching our faith and attention,  
His lessons aren't learned on the calm quiet sea,  
It takes the heights and the depths for expansion.



Molly Blann Day

## The Sunset

I watched a magnificent sunset tonight  
In shades of pink, orange, purple and red;  
On canvas it would be garish and loud  
But on God's canvas of the sky—vibrant and alive.

In harmony and beauty it glowed,  
Changing colors at the blink of an eye;  
If you doubt there is a God, ask yourself:  
"Who else could create such a sky."

I've tried to paint it, but it never is right,  
I can't get the glow and God's light;  
Only He, with His eye for the majestic  
Could do it and get it just right.

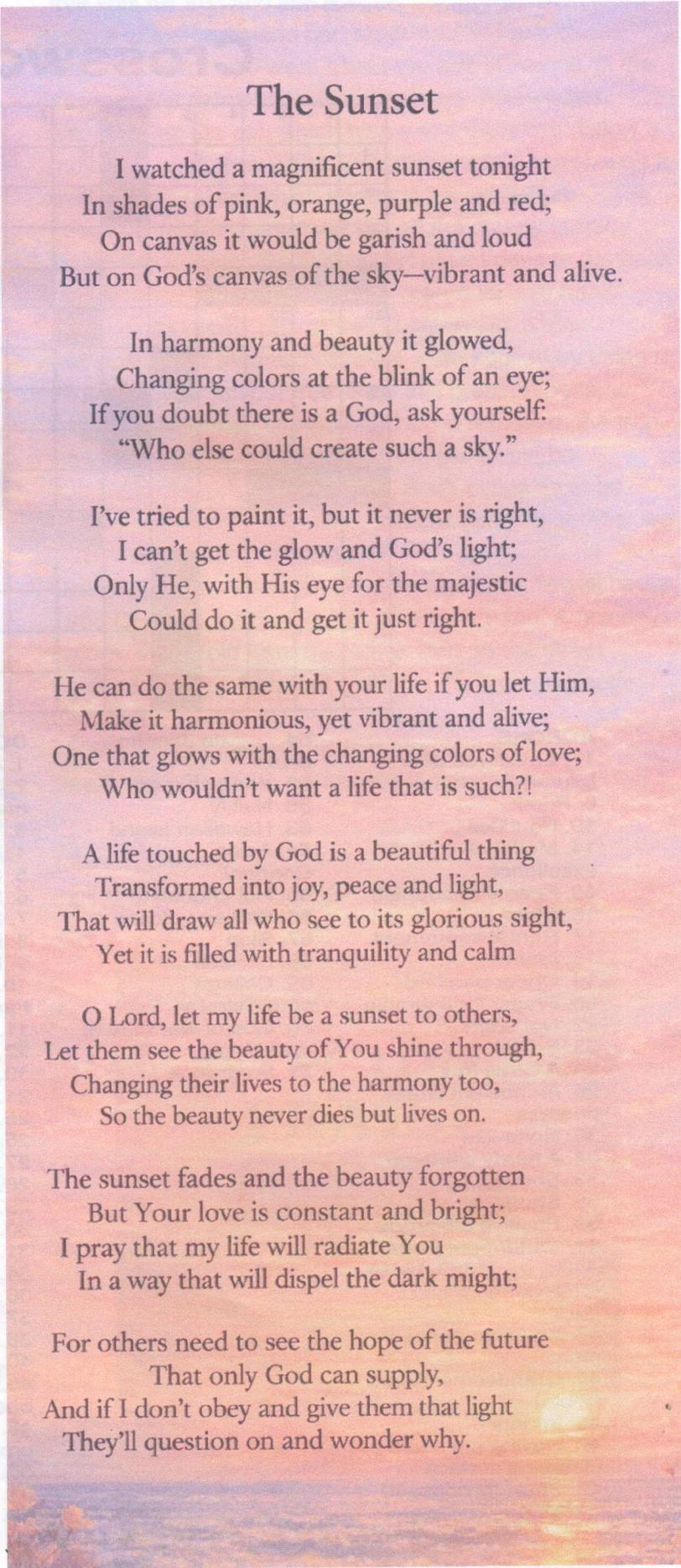
He can do the same with your life if you let Him,  
Make it harmonious, yet vibrant and alive;  
One that glows with the changing colors of love;  
Who wouldn't want a life that is such?!

A life touched by God is a beautiful thing  
Transformed into joy, peace and light,  
That will draw all who see to its glorious sight,  
Yet it is filled with tranquility and calm

O Lord, let my life be a sunset to others,  
Let them see the beauty of You shine through,  
Changing their lives to the harmony too,  
So the beauty never dies but lives on.

The sunset fades and the beauty forgotten  
But Your love is constant and bright;  
I pray that my life will radiate You  
In a way that will dispel the dark might;

For others need to see the hope of the future  
That only God can supply,  
And if I don't obey and give them that light  
They'll question on and wonder why.



Molly Blann Day

## COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Mitchell BINGO

Bingo is held on the last Friday of the month at the Mitchell Community Hall on Nelson Ave. Games start at 6:00 pm

### Fossil Food Pantry Distribution

Tuesday, January 20th, 9 am - 12 noon

We served 96 families last month!

If anyone needs food or assistance, please call or text Dawn Garcia (310)486-2397

### Senior Meal in Mitchell

Fridays @ Noon

at the Mitchell Community Hall

on Nelson Avenue

60 and over - \$5.00 59 and under -\$6.00

(See MENU on page 12)

ALL are invited! Please join us!

### Mitchell City Council

Meets every third Tuesday at 5:30 p.m.

at the Community Hall on Nelson Ave.

The Public is encouraged to attend!

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## REAL ESTATE - MITCHELL, OR

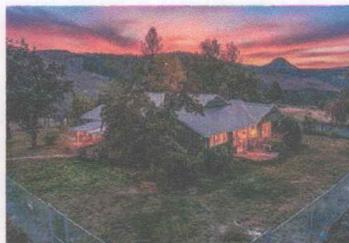
16240 Lost Coyote Ln  
Mitchell, OR

**\$395,000**

203.6 acres with a cozy 1 bd, 2 ba, 1,440 sqft home/cabin  
CROOK COUNTY PROPERTIES LLC  
541-447-3020



Year-round pond



82+ acres fully fenced and cross-fenced

19369 US HWY 26  
Mitchell, OR

**\$899,000**

3 bds, 2 ba, 1,956 sqft house, barn, multiple shops, machine sheds, and hay storage -  
COLDWELL BANKER SUN COUNTRY  
541-447-4433

## Solution

H	I	N	D	S		P	L	O	P		S	A	C	S	
I	D	E	A	L		L	A	M	E		T	A	L	E	
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E	T	N	A			H	A	L	T		E	R	R	O	R
D	E	A	N			A	R	E	S		S	M	E	L	L

♥ Don't forget Valentine's Day! ♥

February 14th

# MG Home Repair & Construction

Mike Gangstead - General Contractor  
CCB # 147094, Bonded & Insured

(541) 480-9878 Cell

PO Box 321 • Mitchell, OR 97750  
e-mail: mikegangstead@gmail.com

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## SENIOR MEAL

EVERY FRIDAY AT 12 NOON

MITCHELL COMMUNITY HALL  
108 NELSON AVE., MITCHELL, OR 97750

Homemade, from scratch,  
delicious food prepared by  
**Chef Sharon!**

60 &  
OVER  
\$5.00



59 &  
UNDER  
\$6.00

EVERYONE IS WELCOME!

### Menu

JAN 23	Pork and kraut, peas, veggie tray, fruit cobbler
JAN 30	Spaghetti, garlic bread, green salad, fruit, cake
FEB 6	Creamy beef stroganoff, green beans, jello salad, dessert
FEB 13	♥ Happy Valentine's Day! ♥ Sweet and sour chicken, Rice, baked veggies, fruit, cheesecake

Community Advertisement

## Domestic Help!

Meals • Errands • Housecleaning

- ✓ Cooking Meals
- ✓ Running Errands
- ✓ House Cleaning
- ✓ Laundry

**Mona's Home Maintenance**  
Mona Foster  
Owner/Operator  
503-899-5060  
[monaslisa@hotmail.com](mailto:monaslisa@hotmail.com)

Call Mona for Help Today!

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Reservation Preferred - Walk In's Welcome

## TIMBUCK II'S EXQUISITE EATERY

# Valentine's Dinner



Valentine's Dinner for Two at TimbuckII Eatery. Indulge in an unforgettable dining experience, Every Couple will receive a Red Rose, Inside Fine Dining is available, Outside options are also available around the heated tables and bonfires.



Enjoy the soft Acoustic Tunes of Matt Allen from 5:00-6:30 PM Followed by Love Songs with The Simpletones at 6:30



## menu

- 1/2 Dungeness Crab
- 8oz Blackened USDA Prime Sirloin
- Rice Pilaf with Orzo & Herbs
- Fresh Sourdough

Your Choice of Clam Chowder or House Salad

Dessert Choices:  
Chocolate Truffle Cake  
Pistachio moelleux cake  
Bananas Foster



CONTACT TO MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS

Jennifer Mortimore 208-315-1351

43634 Rowe Creek Rd. Mitchell OR 97750