

# PIANOS

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person to sit on the piano bench and play.

“Music makes people happy,” Jacobson said. “People just want to sing. And art has the flexibility where it’s OK if you’re not perfect. Art pushes boundaries.”

Jacobson said it was easy to get people to donate their pianos. In fact, she said, it was amazing to see how many people didn’t want their pianos.

If she wanted to add more pianos to the community, she doesn’t have to worry about getting one donated.

It’s the upkeep that will be more difficult.

A piano tuner has been hired and will take care of the pianos, Jacobson said, and she’s hoping people in the community who want this project to succeed will be willing to donate money toward the pianos’ maintenance.

The process of deciding where to place the pianos has also been a challenge. Jacobson went in front of the La Grande Arts Commission and then had to propose the idea to the La Grande City Council to request permission to put a piano at Max Square and at the Skate Park.

The councilors were supportive of her project, but said in order for them to approve it, they must first see an exact rendering of what the artist will paint on each piano. Jacobson is still working on that.

She said the city had been approached previously with a project very similar to the Painted Piano Project. There was no money to pay for it, though, and it didn’t go further than that. Jacobson was willing to do all the legwork to get the project off the ground, but she’s hoping people will come forward now and join the effort.

“I need someone to watch over a piano, or all of them,” Jacobson said. “Cover it when there’s a storm. I hope there are people who are willing to help finance this. I hope this becomes a community project.”

Right now, the pianos are mostly under a covering so they’re protected from the elements. In October, all the pianos will be taken inside.

So far, the banks have agreed to pay the cost of upkeep for the pianos out of their budgets.

U.S. Bank Manager Stacey Candlish said she was behind this project from the beginning.

“I love it,” she said. “It’s important to have an art presence in the community. I was approached last year with this vision and was completely supportive.”

Candlish said since the piano was brought in on Aug. 30, she has seen people playing it.

“We’re hoping the artist will paint the piano within 30 days,” she said. “It’s so exciting. This is going to be really positive.”

She said she’s hoping to hold recitals at the bank with the piano. She also mentioned the bank’s staff will bring the piano in when the weather gets bad.

Jacobson is personally hoping to bring groups to the pianos and hold concerts on the sidewalks, then have anyone who wants to join in do so.

“Art is important to a community,” Jacobson said. “It’s been proven how beneficial art and music is for people. It makes them happy (and) improves brain function. Whether you’re artistic or just an observer, people get joy from listening to music.”

She also said it will surprise people to find out who has musical talent. She mentioned Shawn Mangum, who works at Edward Jones on Adams Avenue, sat down



Cherise Kaechele / The Observer

One of the pianos is located at Nature’s Pantry on Washington Avenue. The employees are hoping to hold recitals at the store.

at one of the pianos last week and started playing.

“I had no idea he could play,” she said. “He’s my financial adviser.”

She said that’s why the arts are vital to a community. It brings people together.

“People from all different backgrounds, political organizations and religions can gather around a piano and enjoy it,” Jacobson said. “They could be enemies, but for a period of time, they could love the same thing.

Music is an equalizer. It doesn’t know socioeconomics. It has no boundaries.”

And to add to that, she said, when people hear a piano playing when they are walking down the sidewalk, they will be curious and stop and listen to the music. She’s already seen it happen since the pianos were set up downtown.

At Nature’s Pantry, Jacobson showed The Observer the piano inside the grocery store. She sat down at the piano and was joined by one of her own students, Mary Kellogg. Together, the two played for the customers at the store.

Blake Bars, the manager of the store, stood nearby to listen to the two play.

“The arts and music are so important for our children and the community,” Bars

said. “It’s a fun way to bring awareness. Jamie has done her due diligence on putting this on. We’ll be scheduling performers to play, and we’ll have kids perform here too. We’re excited to see where it goes.”

Jacobson said besides the financial support and the “piano buddies,” who would take care of the pianos during bad weather, she’s looking to get people to adopt or sponsor a piano to cover the cost of maintenance.

She’s also looking for artists who can come up with a rendering for the art to be painted on the pianos, which would need to be approved by the business or the city, depending on its location. The artists will be paid for their time and support, with a cap of \$300.

There is a need to sponsor the artists as well, but Jacobson said she has money enough through a local grant to pay for two artists right now.

“I have a love for people having access to music,” she said. “I don’t know how far this will go. It is my hope there is music hidden in this community and now people have access to share it.”

To help support the project, contact Jacobson at collectivekeyslg@gmail.com or 541-910-1102.

# WALDEN

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she delivered to Walden’s office.

“I truly appreciate your willingness to share a stage with me to discuss the priorities and concerns of the voters of our district,” she wrote.

The Umatilla County debate, sponsored by the local chapter of the American Association of University Women, is slated for Aug. 31.

Nichole van Eikeren, McLeod-Skinner’s campaign director, said the debate dates and locations aren’t set in stone, but the Umatilla County debate would likely take place at Blue Mountain Community College in Pendleton.

Van Eikeren said the dates were based on the invitations sent out by the debate sponsors, and they weren’t based around Walden’s schedule in the House of Representatives.

A congressional recess runs through the end of August, and even if Walden was unavailable, van Eikeren said McLeod-Skinner’s campaign was willing to reschedule the debate times.

In her invitation, McLeod-Skinner requested that at least two of the debates be moderated by local media. She also wants at least one event held in a town hall style where voters could ask questions of the candidates.

In the event that Walden does not attend the Umatilla County debates, van Eikeren said the AAUW showed some interest in allowing McLeod-Skinner to hold an event where she speaks to voters by herself.

Walden has cruised to victory in each of his campaigns since he was first elected to Congress in 1998, often taking more than 70 percent of the vote.

Local election agencies will begin mailing out ballots to voters on Oct. 17. Election Day is Nov. 6.

# BISON

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Yellowstone officials warn visitors to stay at least 25 yards (23 meters) away from bison, which injure tourists every year who get too close.

After the video gained attention online and Yellowstone rangers learned of Reinke’s charges in Grand Teton, an assistant U.S. attorney asked that his bond

be revoked. A warrant was issued for Reinke’s arrest.

He had told rangers he planned to travel to Glacier National Park. Rangers there were looking for his vehicle when they got a report about two guests arguing and creating a disturbance at Many Glacier Hotel.

Rangers identified one of the guests as Reinke, who was sent back to Yellowstone and appeared in U.S. court Friday.

# FAIR

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was in years past and what it is now. Some people (haven’t) come back because they had a bad time, and now we’re trying to (convince them to) come back, come see what’s new.”

In the future, the fair board hopes to apply for

more grants and potentially attract bigger musical acts.

“We want to make it so the fair is a tourist attraction,” Horn said.

For more information on the Union County Fair contact uceventcoordinator@gmail.com.

Contact Max Denning at 541-963-3161 or mdenning@lagrandeobserver.com.

# Search and Rescue team drills with a consequential game of hide-and-seek

By Kathy Aney  
East Oregonian

It was an old-fashioned game of hide-and-seek, with some new toys.

The seekers had the latest technology and years of collective experience in searching and finding. The hider had acres of forest in which to vanish.

The searchers included members of Umatilla County and Walla Walla County search and rescue units. They gathered early Saturday at a staging area near Tollgate for a joint training exercise.

Incident commander Bob English, of Umatilla County SAR, described the scenario. The searchers stood and sat in a semi-circle, hydrating as they listened.

“A young man named Andrei is lost,” English said. “He’s 12, about five feet tall. He’s from Houston, Texas. Brown eyes, brown hair and 110 pounds. Wearing running shoes, green T-shirt, red ball cap, blue windbreaker. He has a day pack, a bottle of water and a cloth bag. He was looking for huckleberries.”

The boy had disappeared about 8 p.m. the night before.

About a mile away, the “victim” lay on a steep forested slope at the base of a big white fir tree. Andrei Neacsu had ostensibly gotten

separated from his family while picking wild berries. As the sky darkened, he lost his balance and suffered a horrendous fall. He bled internally and started going into shock.

The clock was ticking. The searchers didn’t know most of these details yet. All they had was a missing person report, the boy’s last known location and a plan.

English pointed to a whiteboard hung on the door of the motorhome that doubled as a command center. On the board were coordinates of where Andrei had last been seen and information about weather, terrain, radio channels and assignments. The group had been divided into three teams.

Umatilla County Emergency Manager Tom Roberts and Bill Morris would monitor the roads and fly a drone. Two teams would search separate areas near the boy’s last known location.

The four members of Team 2 piled into a Polaris side-by-side and headed down a two-track dirt road. They disembarked after three quarters of a mile and got a look at their search area, a steep 300-yard-wide rectangle of land that descended to Woodward Creek.

The four — Craig Russell, Kendra Russell, Tom Beyer

and Carl Sorrels — huddled together looking at the map and strategizing. The Russells, both Pendleton attorneys and members of the Umatilla County unit, are relative newcomers to SAR. Beyer, a Walla Walla County sheriff’s deputy, and Sorrels, a Walla Walla electrician, are veterans.

The group devised a plan. They would walk four abreast sidehill, close enough to see the person on either side, at a compass bearing that would take them southeast. They would trek 300 meters, pivot and walk back the same distance on the next section of hill.

The searchers kept track of steps to determine distance. Beyer, for example, walks 65 paces for every 100 me-

ters. They hiked carefully through huckleberry bushes, cone flower, bracken ferns and logging slash. Calls of “Andrei” rang out with periods of silence following. A drone buzzed intermittently overhead.

Sorrels, partway through the first pass, spotted a flash of blue on the forest floor. He walked to the object, carefully avoiding footprints in the soft dirt nearby and picked up a blue windbreaker. He eyeballed it and called Craig Russel, the team leader for the day. Russell radioed command.

Sorrels looked around and tried to mind-meld with Andrei.

“In my mind, I’m a huckleberry picker,” he said. “I’m getting hot and I drop my

windbreaker.”

Sorrels planted a long stick in the earth to mark the spot and walked to the road where his squad had regrouped to await direction from command in light of the new development. On the road, Beyer bent down, picked up a small piece of a wrapper and examined it. “Hey, Craig,” he said.

“There’s a piece of a trail mix wrapper here. It looks pretty new.”

The four members of Team 1 walked by on the road, leaping to a different area after the windbreaker discovery. Down the road, they found the rest of the wrapper, confirmed it was the Costco brand of trail mix

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**La Grande FARMERS MARKET**  
August Market Events

Located in Max Square, downtown La Grande  
Open Saturdays 9am - noon and Tuesdays 3:30 to 6:00pm

**SATURDAY, AUGUST 11TH - PIE DAY!**  
Enter to win our Pie Baking Contest!  
Who can make the best pie? You?

**SATURDAY, AUGUST 25TH - SALSA FESTIVAL!**  
9am to noon at the market - Sponsored by Wes Williams  
Salsa making contest, Salsa tasting, Salsa music and Salsa Dancing!

**TUESDAY, AUGUST 28TH -**  
MUSIC-FOOD-BEER-GAMES AT THE TUESDAY MARKET 3:30 - 6PM!  
Mamacita's Market Margaritas • Side A Beer Garden  
Beer Choir 5-6:00pm • Yia Yia Nikkis  
Hines BBQ • Tuesday Market!!

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**What's Cooking ?**  
by Sandy Sorrels of  
**TEN DEPOT STREET**



Looks like it is going to be pretty hot this week. So come to **Ten Depot Street** for some air conditioned relief and let us do the cooking for you. Or you can get almost anything on our menu for take-out.

Our **Blue Plate Special** this week features our premium Prime Rib simmered to perfection in our homemade barbecue sauce served with our famous potato salad made from my grandmother's recipe.

For a **Salad Special** this week, we will be featuring **Grilled Shrimp with Jalapeño Vinaigrette** on a bed of fresh organic salad greens from **Nella Mae's Farm**. Served with a garlic baguette, this is a delicious salad made with our jumbo wild Gulf Shrimp.

Tomorrow, August 7, is the **First Tuesday Open Mic** at **Ten Depot Street** with the ever dynamic host **Ashley O'Toole**. Open Mic is a chance for local talent to perform. We encourage anyone who has an act to share, to give it a try. Come join Ashley and see what talent turns up.

Then Thursday, the **Naughty Pine Band**, a Reggae inspired trio with original compositions and lyrics, is playing. Based in the Tri-Cities, their music is about “love for your fellow man, life’s struggles, and burning trees.” They played for us once before and are a really fun band.

We are still waiting for local huckleberries for **Huckleberry Daiquiris**. Huckleberries seem to be scarce this year as opposed to last year when there was an abundance. In the mean time, there are some good peaches available, so we will start with fresh **Peach Daiquiris**.

**BLUE PLATE SPECIAL \$10.95**  
Open Faced Barbecued Prime Rib Sandwich, potato salad, melon salad (served Monday through Friday)