

ARTS

Continued from Page 1A opportunities in their local university, so they don't have to go very far to get a fantastic education that's hands-on and engaging," Harshberger said.

Kenn Wheeler, an associate professor of theatre, said in his 17 years of experience at EOU, he has noticed a lot of LHS students attend college elsewhere.

"This is an opportunity for us to show kids what we have to offer and to get them interested," Wheeler said.

Yet, in the performance of "Almost, Maine," three of the four actors were La Grande High School graduates. Wheeler said he hopes that helps attract local students to the university.

"I see it as a definite recruiting possibility," he said.

In his session, Wheeler took students through some basic stage combat with wooden "swords."

"We offer a whole range of theatre classes, from acting to directing to backstage things," Wheeler said. "Stage combat is just one of the classes we offer."

This year, the theme of the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, "Monsters, Myths and Storytelling," lasts the entire school year and permeates each department. To highlight the theme, a number of the sessions were loosely related to monsters, such as creating masks, creating monsters in the ceramics studio, learning about the archeology of mummies and building a monster to replicate Grendel's mother in "Beowulf"

Harshberger, whose job includes coordinating campus tours and visits, said she had never put on an event of this size.

"I have never programmed something like this for La Grande High School before," she said.

Shauna Hendrickson, an English and social studies teacher at LHS who helped coordinate the day at EOU, said for the past five years LHS freshmen have gone on an annual



Max Denning / The Observer

Students attempt to recreate Grendel's mother in Beowulf, after reading a section which describes her.

tour of the university, but this was the first year they had classes with EOU professors.

"It was really amazing," Hendrickson said. "All the classes were really good. They were interesting (and) engaging."

Hendrickson said she thought the trip to EOU helped college seem more attainable to some students.

"One of the students I had in

my group this year had never seen himself as a college student and he loved it," she said. "He said, 'Everything is here. They have food, they have classes, they have dorms.' (Before this) he did not have a vision for what college is like. That is what we are hoping to provide students with Success 101. That they can visualize their own future as a college student."

LGSD

Continued from Page 1A are 644 students. There are 185 students in its junior class but only 158 in 10th grade, 154 in ninth grade and less than 150 in 12th grade.

The school district's online school, the La Grande Learning Academy, now in its second year, has 27 students.

Panike said the larger classes in most of the elementary grades is encouraging, noting they will give the school district a better chance of having stable or increasing enrollment in the future.

The school district's enrollment growth appears to have momentarily stopped after several years of noteworthy growth. The previous three years, the school district had grown by an average of 65 students every year. This bolstered the school district's budget, since it receives about \$7,700 per student from the state.

The additional money the school district received from enrollment growth helped pay for the installation of a new high school track and the construction of new high school tennis courts on K Avenue, which are almost complete.

"The additional funding was used to improve the district," Panike said.

Although the district's enrollment has not jumped this school year, Panike said its budget is solid because enrollment is stable.

The number of students in the school district from lower-income families appears to be declining, Panike told the board Wednesday. He explained the number of families applying for free and reduced cost school lunches for their children has decreased, and when he calls families to find out why they have not applied, they often say their financial status has improved.

"This is a sign of the strong economy," Panike said.

The financial status of all La Grande school families has not jumped, however, and Panike believes there are a number of families eligible for free and reduced cost lunches who have not applied. He encourages them to apply, because this will not only help them but also help the school district.

Panike explained when the school district has a high percentage of students receiving free and reduced cost lunches, it is eligible to apply for certain federal and state grants.

Families who believe they may qualify for the lunch program may call the school district, Panike said.

RUTHERFORD

Continued from Page 1A wants," Rutherford said. "I'm a volunteer and whatever they vote on is what's going to be done — not what I want. That's what's taking place right now."

Rutherford claims the council exercises favoritism and frequently cancels or reschedules its monthly meetings without properly notifying the public — actions he would seek to change if elected.

"The little people don't matter, but the 'big names,' the ones that are pushing for issues, (the council) sides with them," Rutherford said of the current council. "It's corrupt."

In dealing with these perceived issues, Rutherford hopes to facilitate more open, honest communication between the city council and Elgin's residents, and garner more community input overall.

"If you ask me a question, I'm going to answer

honestly. If you bring it to the table, it's going to be (discussed)," he said.

Rutherford also wants to address property line/zoning issue discrepancies among Elgin residents, a problem he says many in the community have dealt with, as well as addressing the city's outdated sewer lines and water meters and creating more places for Elgin's youth to hang out.

"There's nothing in Elgin to do for kids and (that's when) they get into mischief," he said.

Concerning other potential issues, Rutherford said, "I haven't discussed with city members yet what they want. I don't know what's going on."

Following a 2017 assault charge stemming from an incident involving city councilman Rocky Burgess, Rutherford is currently barred by law from attending city council meetings.

"They claimed I assaulted (him), but I was defending myself," Rutherford said of the incident.

FORUM

Continued from Page 1A

Circuit Court Judge were in attendance, Mona Williams and Wes Williams. They were each asked what they would do to keep things equitable between the two county's courts.

Mona Williams, who was appointed circuit court judge by the governor in June to fill out retiring Judge Russell West's term, said she has already addressed some of the disparities.

"When we are looking at policy changes that need to be made, I remind the courts to consider how (it will) affect Wallowa County," Mona Williams said.

Wallowa County court proceedings are generally held on Wednesdays, unless a multi-day trial is scheduled.

Wes Williams said to be considerate of Wallowa County's resources for court security and drug treatment court, the court's steering committee could meet on those days when court staff is present.

When asked what other changes the judges would like to see in the court system, Wes Williams said lowering court costs would be a big service to those with low incomes.

"We need to be willing to charge less money," he said.

He also suggested starting an indigent defense fund to help those who are addicted get treatment and

reduce recidivism.

Mona Williams said she would like to see treatment options other than putting addicts in jail.

"There are people in jail who don't belong there. They belong in mental health treatment," she said. "We need to get treatment courts in both counties."

All four Wallowa County candidates for county commissioner were on hand for questions Wednesday night. Cliff Walters of Joseph fielded the first question, asking how he would work with the U.S. Forest Service and its Blue Mountain Forest Plan Revision to see that more timber is harvested on the national forest.

"We need more mills," Walters said. "It makes me sick to see log trucks going out of the county."

Dan DeBoie said the commissioners have a voice in the federal planning process, but there are limitations.

"We need a local voice, but I can't promise you what can happen — some of it is way out of our control," he said.

Diane Daggett said when it comes to working on natural resource issues with state and federal agencies, the county commissioners benefit from the advice of its Natural Resource Advisory Committee.

She said the county should particularly see that categorical exclusions allowed under the National Environmental Policy Act are exercised on

forest projects when possible.

"There is a policy for categorical exclusions to expedite processes that are environmentally safe," Daggett said. "We can put pressure when a CE is approved so that work can be done without stalling."

John Hillock agreed the commissioners rely on the advice of the Advisory Committee when it comes to weighing in on public land policy, especially where public land is a fire hazard to private property, like around Wallowa Lake.

"When it comes to Mt. Howard's fuel loading, it is a fire, life and safety issue. We are fighting for the safety of our citizens," he said.

When asked about the commission's biggest challenges DeBoie said it is important that people of different belief and value systems communicate. He said he sees himself as a moderate voice.

DeBoie said, "We can't afford to have factions that don't work together. We need someone in the middle who takes everyone into account."

Daggett said she would like to see the county encouraging private sector agriculture innovation in value-added processes, improving technology and developing housing for working people.

Hillock said the focus of his campaign is progress: "Progress can be as small as filling one more pothole. We can keep the county livable if we all work together."



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