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Good day to our valued subscriber Jack Skellington of Halloween Town

LGPD takes proactive measures to ensure Halloween safety

By Audrey Love
The Observer

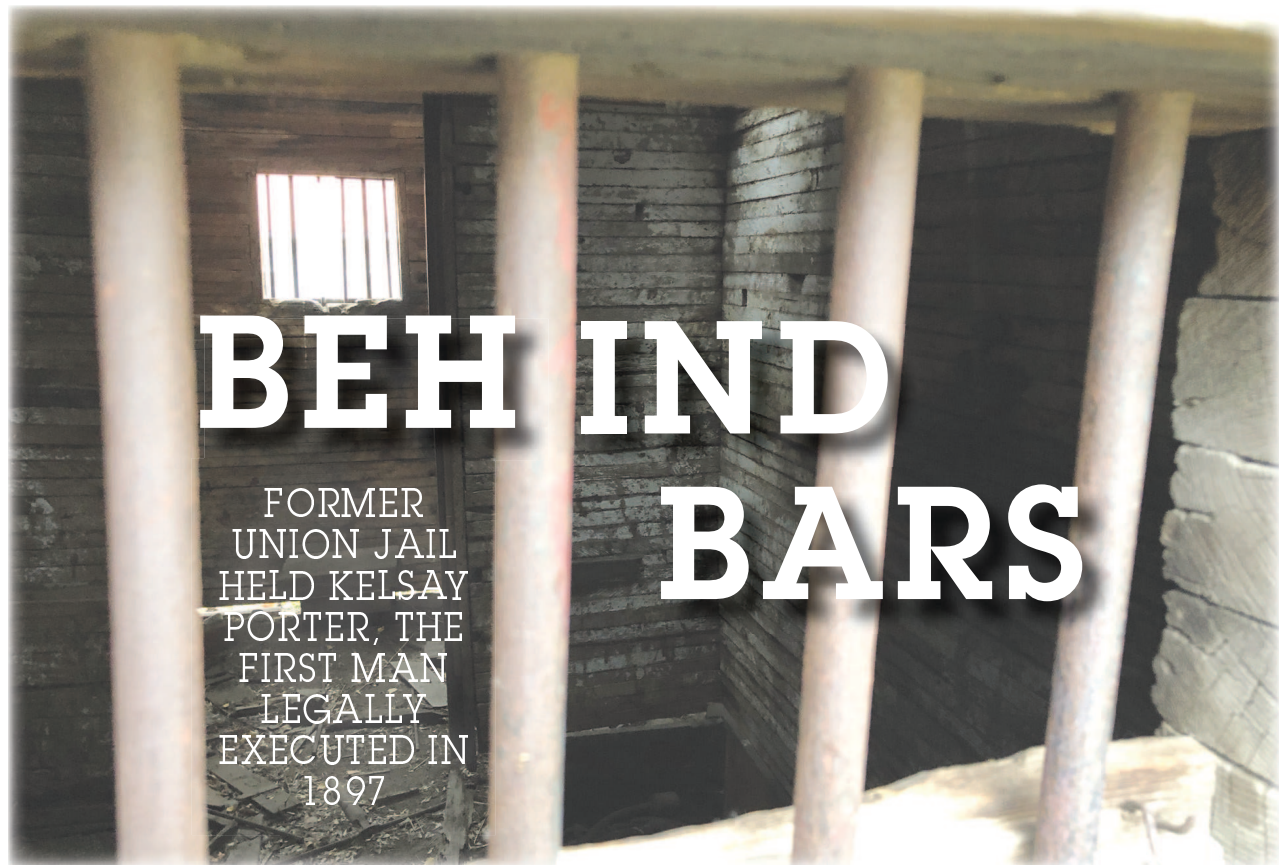
Aside from the innocuous frights typical of roaming darkened neighborhood streets on Halloween night, it's assumed injury and crime might also be factors to be wary of. Contrary to what some might suspect, however, there are usually more treats than tricks in La Grande, but law enforcement can never be sure what All Hallow's Eve will bring.

"Halloween is similar to some of the other holidays throughout the calendar year (in that) we can't predict that it's going to be consistently busy or uneventful, because historically it's been variable," said La Grande Police Department Lt. Gary Bell.

With the advent of La Grande Main Street's annual Trunk-or-Treat event downtown, Bell said more residents are opting to don their costumes earlier in the evening — around 4 to 6 p.m. — instead of the time-honored tradition of trick-or-treating after the sun goes down. In terms of public safety, Bell noted this is a plus.

"It's a great opportunity for kids and their families to (trick-or-treat) in a safe environment," he said. "Public safety on Halloween is (something) we're always very concerned with and paying close attention to because the last thing we want to see is a child get (hurt)."

LGPD Chief Brian Harvey noted that based on the department's history, See **LGPD** / Page 6A



BEHIND BARS

FORMER UNION JAIL HELD KELSAY PORTER, THE FIRST MAN LEGALLY EXECUTED IN 1897

By Dick Mason
The Observer

Elegant architectural features are easy to find in Union, ranging from the ornate arches decorating many of the city's Victorian-style homes to the Gothic columns at the eastern entrance of Union High School. Amid such features, bland structures like the aging brick boiler room at UHS are easily overlooked.

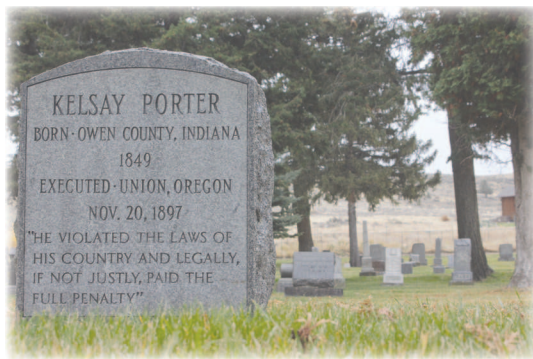
Yet, the boiler room, as a silent witness to history, has a story to share.

The building, which served as a jail from the late 1800s through the early 1900s, once housed an inmate who holds a unique place in Union County's history, a distinction some people are convinced he does not deserve.

That man was Kelsay Porter, the only individual ever legally executed in Union County. Porter was hung in November 1897, outside the jail after being convicted of murdering three of his neighbors in Pine Valley.

Many people objected to the execution, according to the late La Grande historian Jack Evans. The protestors included 500 Pine Valley residents who signed a petition pleading for

See **Union** / Page 6A



Two old jails remaining in Elgin likely to become part of museum center

By Dick Mason
The Observer

Two links to Elgin's law enforcement history may someday be tourist attractions.

Plans are being made to include Elgin's two old jails in a local history center. The jails will be part of the Elgin Museum collection, which is being moved into Elgin's former city hall building, which was vacated last week when the city moved its offices into the old W.C. Construction building, said Gerald Hopkins of the Elgin's museum society.

Elgin's most primitive and austere old jail is a small wooden shack now on the west side of the Opera House. It was once located on Elgin's main street, according to Union County historian Bob Bull of La Grande. Today it is being used by the City of Elgin as a

See **Elgin** / Page 6A



Cherise Kaechele photos / The Observer

The Elgin Museum will be adding Elgin's two historic jails to its collections soon. In the top photo, and the smaller middle photo, is the wooden jail located behind the old Elgin City Hall. Also, Kelsay Porter's gravestone is located at the Union Victorian Cemetery. Porter is the only man ever legally executed in Union County. Finally, the building attached to Union High School (bottom photo), was once Union's jail.

Nonprofit arts organizations bring \$1.2 million to Northeast Oregon

By Max Denning
The Observer

A study commissioned by Americans for the Arts found that nonprofit arts and culture generated \$1.2 million in economic activity in the 2016 fiscal year in Baker, Wallowa and Union counties.

The Arts & Economic Prosperity 5 study examined the economic impact of nonprofit arts and culture organizations in 341 study regions. In regions of similar size to Northeast Oregon — with populations of fewer than 50,000 — the median industry expenditures in 2016 were \$5.3 million, more than four times the total industry expenditures in Northeast Oregon in the

2015 fiscal year. However, Mika Morton, co-executive director of Art Center East, said she thought the economic impact in Northeast Oregon was greater than the study portrayed.

"It's not an exact accurate count in terms of audience numbers and other organizations and how much they contribute to the local economy," Morton said.

Morton noted that if all the arts organizations in the area had participated in the survey, the economic impact dollar figure would have doubled or possibly tripled. In the three counties, only six organizations responded to the survey: Crossroads Carnegie Arts Center,

Art Center East, Eastern Oregon Regional Theatre, Josephy Center for Arts and Culture, Liberty Theatre Foundation and Northeast Oregon Folklore Society.

ACE contributed to the study by filling out an organizational survey and also having attendees at their events fill out an arts patron study. Darcy Dolge, co-executive director of ACE, said the organization had approximately 25 volunteers who collected surveys from arts patrons at events over the 2016 fiscal year. Dolge said she was glad to have proof of the influence of the arts in Northeast Oregon.

"Some people are unfamiliar with the impact arts are having

on their community, since we live in a beautifully rich ag and ranch, forestry community," Dolge said. "Arts might not be the first thing on their list to do on a weekend. So it's nice to have a survey like this to show, in real time, this is the impact. It's not just a feeling we have, they're real numbers."

In Oregon, 11 counties, cities and regions contributed to the study. The Northeast Oregon region reported the smallest economic impact of any of those that reported. According to the study, the least populated region, the Southern Oregon area, which encompasses a population of only 29,585, brings in

See **Arts** / Page 6A

INDEX

Business.....1B Horoscope.....7B Sports.....7A
Classified.....5B Lottery.....2A Sudoku.....4B
Comics.....4B Obituaries.....3A Wonderword.....4B
Crossword.....7B Opinion.....4A
Dear Abby...10B Record.....3A

WEATHER Full forecast on the back of B section



Tonight
48 LOW
Mainly cloudy



Thursday
60/44
Brief showers

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