

MEALS

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1978. I would help her when I was home. I guess I'm following in her footsteps."

Although Tarter said the last part a little hesitantly, her commitment to her mother's vision is indisputable. She has been helping feed the seniors — or anyone who needs a good meal — full time since 1997.

Tarter said the volunteers rent space at the Methodist Church, where they serve the meals.

Every Tuesday, the meals are prepared for the community. There is a suggested donation, but Tarter said they wouldn't turn anyone away. This week's meal was a Thanksgiving dinner with all the fixings.

Tarter said the average attendance for the weekly meal is about 35 people, including the volunteers who prepare the food.

In the past, she said, different organizations helped with the senior meals on a rotating basis. However, it's just a small few now.

The volunteers who were helping this week all seemed

to have a connection to one another.

In most instances, they began helping because they knew one of the volunteers.

Linda McReynolds has been volunteering to organize the meals since 1997, she said. Tarter asked McReynolds to help her prepare the night before the meals are served. Once she began volunteering, she was hooked.

"I get really excited when everyone shows up (for the meal)," McReynolds said, adding she enjoys helping.

However, the job is very demanding and she was getting tired so she recently began sharing the responsibility of organizing the meals — and Dori Frazer was the person who stepped up.

"I'm a sucker," Frazer said, laughing about how she got involved with the senior meals. "I've worked off and on in the food industry. Gracie asked me if I could help plan everything."

Frazer and McReynolds' job isn't easy. They have to plan the menu, get enough food for every week, then

help cook and serve it.

This week, Joy Ann Smith, Brandi Fox and Mary Dodds were also bustling around the kitchen to help prepare and serve the food.

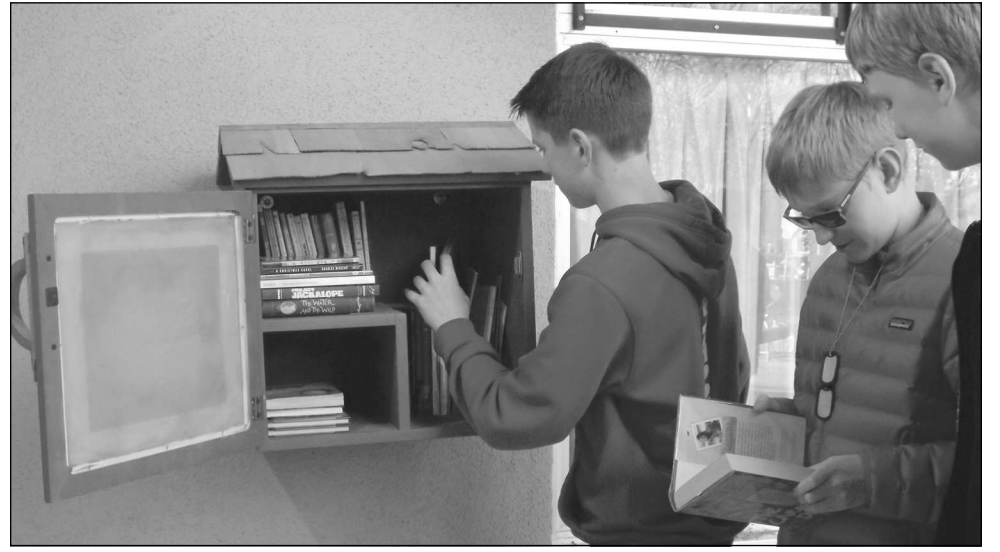
The volunteers are looking to add to their numbers, Tarter said. They could always use more hands to help — and they could also use additional donations to help support the meals. Tarter said, though, they get by.

"We've been making enough to buy the food, and we do have angels helping us," she said, adding there are some in the community who are generous donors.

The meals are available for delivery as well as to-go, but Tarter said seniors who have the time and ability to enjoy eating the meal in the church with others who want to socialize. It is a chance for people to gather and visit, Tarter said.

"We welcome everyone and anyone to come and eat," Tarter said. "It's really a good social time."

Anyone who would like to volunteer or make a donation may call Tarter at 541-562-5675.



Dick Mason / The Observer

Eighth-grader John Remily reaches for a book Tuesday at La Grande Middle School's new Little Free Library. Fellow LMS students Ethan Jacobson and Michael Hansen are examining a book from the library.

LMS

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fiction. He plans to read some of the sci-fi works in the Little Free Library and then bring some of his own to add to the library.

Eighth-grader Ethan Jacobson is also looking forward to visiting the library.

"It is really going to be fun," he said.

Carol Lauritzen of the Mountain Valleys Reading Council, which serves much of Northeast Oregon, is delighted to have the new library in operation because of the role it will play in helping teenagers to read more.

"The whole focus is to make books easily available," said Lauritzen, who is president of the Oregon Literacy Association, which the Mountain Valleys Reading Council is part of.

Lauritzen said it is critical that teenagers read frequently because this will increase the odds that they will become lifelong readers, which has many benefits.

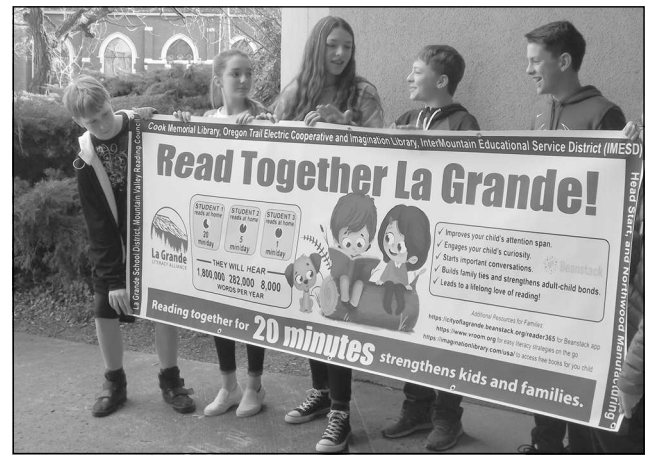
"To be a reader for life you have to keep reading during your teenage years," said Lauritzen, a retired Eastern Oregon University professor who lives in La Grande.

Young people who don't read on their own as teenagers, she said, are much less likely to be avid readers as adults.

LMS Principal Kyle McKinney, like Lauritzen, is pleased with the new Little Free Library.

"Anytime you can get books into the hands of kids is a good thing," he said.

He said it will be useful for students who want to start a new book on the weekend or when the public library isn't open. It will function as a sort of extension of the LMS library,



Dick Mason / The Observer

LMS students hold a La Grande Literacy Alliance banner at a ceremony marking the opening of their school's Little Free Library.

which is one of La Grande School District's two largest libraries.

McKinney said parents sometimes do not realize how important reading is for their sons and daughters. The principal noted, for example, that reading helps children develop writing skills.

"Parents often ask me how they can get their children to become better writers. I tell them to get them to read more," McKinney said. "There is a correlation between reading and writing."

Reading helps people develop a better vocabulary and improves their punctuation and spelling skills, he added.

"They will mimic what they read (in terms of punctuation, spelling and sentence structure)," the

longtime educator said.

The Little Free Library is one of three in the La Grande School District, all installed under the direction of the Mountain Valleys Reading Council. The other two are at Island City and Greenwood elementary schools.

The Little Free Library program is supported by the La Grande Literacy Alliance, which displayed a banner at the ribbon cutting Tuesday for the LMS addition. Members of the La Grande Literacy Alliance are the La Grande School District, Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative, Eastern Oregon Head Start, the InterMountain Education Service District, the Mountain Valleys Reading Council, Cook Memorial Library and Northwood Manufacturing.

USFS

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ongoing, especially on slopes, the plant's niche habitat," Schwartz said.

The McClaran family and Wallowa County filed as interveners in the case. For almost 100 years, the McClarans have winter-grazed cattle in Hells Canyon. Scott McClaran told Sullivan that Spalding's catchfly doesn't have a niche habitat and is found throughout much of Wallowa County.

"We have the longest running permit in the National Recreation Area and it has the highest density of Spalding's catchfly — (and) we aren't even talking about 600,000 acres that haven't been inventoried or the 400,000 ungrazed acres," McClaran said.

Department of Justice attorney Sean Martin, representing the Forest Service, told Sullivan the Range Analysis was designed to improve habitat for catchfly, a species first documented in 2004 that has survived more than 200 years of cattle and horse grazing in the canyon, first by Nez Perce and later by white settlers.

Martin said a survey conducted this summer inventoried 800 more plants than documented at the time of the 2015 decision.

"A Forest Service botany expert said cattle grazing is not threatening the viability of the species," he said. "After all these years, it is not likely to be extirpated any time soon."

The GHCC's complaint said the agency did not "take a hard look at the action's potential environmental consequences" and therefore its decision was arbitrary, capricious, not in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act and "must be reversed and remanded."

"Congress has recognized this place as deserving of special protections," Darilyn Parry, the Greater Hells Canyon Council's executive

director, said. "We're asking the Forest Service to do a supplemental Environmental Impact Statement that adequately evaluates management alternatives that comply with the requirements of the Hells Canyon National Recreation Area and the mandate to protect threatened species like Spalding's catchfly."

In her argument, Schwartz said cattle numbers on the lower Innaha haven't changed much since the 1950s, stating the reduction was only 140 head, but McClaran disagreed. He said outside of the requirements of the Range Analysis, his family voluntarily reduced cattle numbers to give them more flexibility when faced with losing grassland to wildfires, vole invasions and drought.

"We created the flexibility because we thought it was good management," McClaran said. "To say the numbers are about the same as in the 1950s is not accurate."

All three of McClaran's daughters work the ranch and depend on the sale of their cattle for their livelihood. He said through the planning process his family made concessions, but ones they could live with.

"It was a compromise of multiple uses by a lot of different interest groups and different resources," McClaran said. "The stakeholders talked over maps to flesh out all the different opinions and ideas and Greater Hells participated in some of those meetings, but as (the plan) moved through the process they stated their objections without alternatives."

According to Parry, the GHCC waited to see how the decision would be implemented before filing suit. The trigger was the result of a Freedom of Information Act filed in August 2017. The complaint said the response did not include any current allotment management plans nor botanical survey monitoring data.

"We monitored how the

decision was implemented," Parry said. "For example, we wanted to see if the Forest Service would follow any Fish and Wildlife Service's conservation recommendations for the project or conduct additional monitoring of catchfly population, in order to get a sense of how the populations are doing over time."

The McClarans and Wallowa County were represented by Caroline Lobdell of the Western Resources Legal Center at Lewis and Clark Law School in Portland. She argued the plaintiff's case was political and the Forest Service's decision was neither capricious nor arbitrary.

"The plaintiffs say they are not asking for an injunction, but (they) are blaming grazing for everything," Lobdell said. "If they don't like this decision, then we are back to the prior management rule with less benefit."

Todd Nash, Wallowa County commission board chairman and public land cattle rancher, listened to the hearing via phone. He said while relevant points were made on both sides, he believes the land is well-suited for livestock and should remain open for grazing.

"Those pastures have been used since Chief Joseph's days of grazing cattle and horses, and that plant has been resilient all this time, as are the ranchers who occupied that land," Nash said.

Sullivan said as she formed her opinion in the case she would be balancing interests. She concluded by recommending the Forest Service and the Council get together and try to settle the case, while she is working on her opinion.

"Getting rid of grazing in this particular area of the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, I don't see that happening. Now we have to figure out what to do," the judge said. "I have to applaud the McClarans — they are very careful conscientious ranchers who want continued survival."

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