



Outdoors

The new elk master

Inside
EOU hosts tournament to honor former coach, 7A

THE OBSERVER

SERVING UNION AND WALLOWA COUNTIES SINCE 1896

Weekend

FRIDAY-SUNDAY • December 7-9, 2018 • \$1.50

Good day to our valued subscriber Fred Zachow of La Grande

O TEC recognized for helping in hunter's rescue

■ Hunter is expected to make a full recovery

By **Cherise Kaechele**
The Observer

The Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative employees who helped save a hunter who had been dangling upside down for two days during the summer were commended for their help at Wednesday night's La Grande City Council meeting.

In late August, Edward Voelker, of Prineville, was found suspended head down from a tree 20 to 30 feet in the air after he fell while hunting. He was tangled in his safety harness and unable to free himself.

A multi-agency rescue — made up of the La Grande Fire Department, Union County Search and Rescue, LifeFlight, Umatilla County Sheriff's Office, Pendleton Fire Department, Oregon Trail Electric Coop and U.S. Forest Service — all came together to save Voelker, who is 70 years old.

Approximately 30 people were there to help the man. It was not an easy task because of the possible health problems caused by being upside down for two days. Before responders could move Voelker, they had to tackle the challenge of how to treat him 25 feet above the ground. The unusual situation demanded an unusual solution.

LGF D Capt. Robert Tibbetts and LGFD EMT Jerid Ployhar were on their way to the scene when Ployhar made a comment about getting OTEC to help, Tibbetts told The Observer in August. The EMT recalled OTEC employees are trained to save people from power poles, a situation similar to Voelker's plight.

Tibbetts said that was the first time, as far as he knew, the fire department had requested OTEC's bucket truck in a rescue mission.

"I wasn't certain they were going to play ball," Tibbetts was quoted in The Observer. "Not because they aren't helpful, but because it was such an unusual request."

O TEC immediately deployed a truck and its crew got there as quickly as they could. With their help, the medical responders were able to reach Voelker and eventually remove him from his predicament.

At Wednesday night's meeting, the OTEC employees

See **O TEC / Page 5A**

(Lego) brick by (Lego) brick

■ Lego robotics teams from NE Oregon will compete this Saturday at EOU

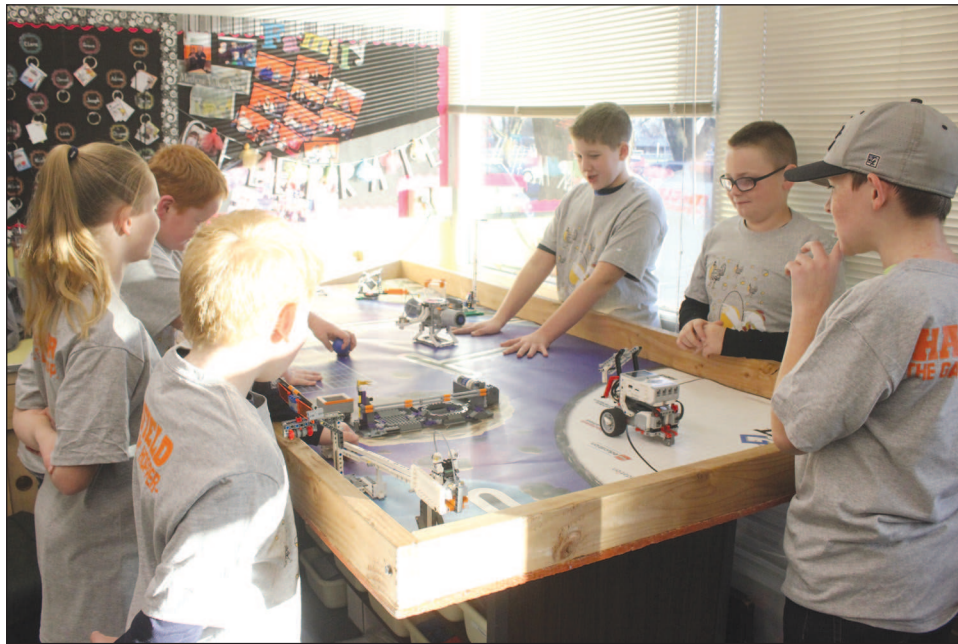
By **Max Denning**
The Observer

Approximately 75 students, ages 9 to 14, from elementary and middle schools all around Northeast Oregon will descend on Eastern Oregon University's Badgley Hall on Saturday to compete in the 15th annual Eastern Oregon Robotics Tournament.

While it's no "BattleBots," these students are tasked with building and programming a Lego robot that can perform a number of "missions," which are loosely related to this year's theme of "Into Orbit" or the problems associated with space travel, on a 4-by-8-foot map.

Even though the programming and performing of missions by the robots, known as the robot game, is the most popular part of the competition, it's only a quarter of the judged event. The participants also prepare a presentation on potential problems that could arise during space travel, they answer questions from judges about the programming and design of their robots and, lastly, they compete in a top secret team challenge prior to the competition.

Richard Croft, associate professor of computer science at EOU and executive director of the tournament, said the students learn to collaborate on unique



Cherise Kaechele/The Observer

The team of La Grande Greenwood Elementary students are preparing for their competition Saturday. On the team is Cameron Canfield, Carter Harden, Carson DeClue, Haiden Davis, Lauren Leathers, Wyatt Murie and Elizabeth Carpenter

EOU Robotics Tournament

The event will begin at 9 a.m. in the Huber Auditorium. The robot part of the competition, which is open to the public, will take place in the multi-story atrium of Badgley Hall on the EOU campus.

problems.

"They learn to work together cooperatively," Croft See **Lego / Page 5A**



Cherise Kaechele/The Observer

Haiden Davis, Carson DeClue and Carter Harden discuss what needs fixed in the robot's programming.

Shakespeare group brings Scrooge, Tiny Tim to La Grande

By **Cherise Kaechele**
The Observer

The La Grande Shakespeare Company is looking to start a holiday tradition in Union County.

The group of actors will perform Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" and, with enough support, will do so every year.

Grant Turner, La Grande Shakespeare Company director, said he's always loved this story.

"I had to take out some of the dialogue but we'll still have a narrator," he said. "We'll be there with music stands and tell the story with sound effects. It should be a lot of fun."

The tale, which was originally written in just six weeks, is about Ebenezer Scrooge who is

visited by three ghosts — the Ghost of Christmas Past, Ghost of Christmas Present and Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come — over three nights. It is a redeeming tale of a man whose past — quite literally — comes to haunt him but who is renewed with the Christmas spirit at the end.

"It's playful and whimsical," the director said of the tale.

The story has been told in many different ways but Turner wanted to stay as true as possible to the original 1843 script. He did have to condense it from 90 minutes to about one hour.

"It's always been a favorite story of mine. I love Christmas. It's my favorite holiday. And I love walking

down the snowy streets of Adams Avenue because I can imagine Bob Cratchit (Scrooge's underpaid clerk) very easily."

Turner, who acts as well as directs, said he opted not to play Cratchit because he knew he couldn't get through the script without crying over Tiny Tim, Cratchit's crippled son.

"I love this story because it's the idea of redemption. It's about changing into a better human being, and that can resonate to this day and age," Turner said.

Kevin Cahill will play Scrooge, and Cassie Johnson, Zaquarie Mendenhall, Rose Peacock, Wylie Peacock, Anne Turner, Nicole Turner and Grant Turner will fill in the

other roles.

The La Grande Shakespeare Company anticipates people will enjoy the intimate play so much they will want to see it every year.

"Come expecting to have fun and hopefully you'll leave with the Christmas spirit," Turner said.

The play will begin tonight and run through this weekend then continue on weekends until Christmas. Showtimes are 7:30 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays and 2 p.m. on Sundays. There will also be a 7:30 p.m. showing on Dec. 23.

The production will be at Looking Glass Books, 1304 Adams Ave., La Grande. Tickets \$10. Call 541-963-8057 for further information or to make reservations.

INDEX

Classified.....4B Lottery.....2A Sports.....7A
Comics.....3B Record.....3A
Crossword.....5B Obituaries.....3A
Dear Abby.....8B Opinion.....4A
Horoscope.....5B Outdoors.....1B

WEATHER Full forecast on the back of B section

Friday 23 LOW Mostly cloudy
 Saturday 37/26 A little snow
 Sunday 37/30 Mostly cloudy

CONTACT US

541-963-3161

Issue 144
2 sections, 16 pages
La Grande, Oregon

Email story ideas to news@lagrandeobserver.com.
More contact info on Page 4A.



MONDAY

COVE SCHOOL HAS COUNTY'S ONLY DEBATE TEAM

Online at lagrandeobserver.com