

E OFF

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The next act in the series will be on March 20 with Wooden Indian Burial Ground, a rock band recognized by The New York Times and NPR for their “rare breed of psychedelic garage music.” World’s Finest, an experimental rock group with roots in punk and ska, will follow up on April 11 for the final show.

Doors will open at 8 p.m. and the show will start at 9 p.m. all three nights.

Music and film lovers will have the opportunity at each music series installment to purchase raffle tickets for prizes like a couple’s date package, complete with dinner and two tickets to the film festival, and a \$500 outdoors adventure package from Blue Mountain Outfitters. The winning raffle tickets will be drawn at the April 11 concert. All money earned from raffle ticket sales and the \$10 cover charges will go toward the Liberty’s cinema makeover, which Jennings esti-

mates will cost about \$120,000.

“If we can get a couple thousand dollars out of these next three months toward campaigning, that would be a great start toward our goals,” he said.

Jennings’ long-term goal is to foster growth in Eastern Oregon’s arts and culture scene through the EOFF and other community programs. This year, for the first time, he’s offering an exclusive pre-screening membership to whomever wants to join. The \$100 membership fee will give film fanatics access to private screening events where they’ll be able to give input on submissions, a pass to the October 2019 festival and an EOFF T-shirt.

Jennings and EOFF co-founders Ian Clark and Mike Surber created the film festival in 2009 mainly for their own cinematic enrichment, but Jennings said they quickly realized the impact the festival could have on the Eastern Oregon community.

“Each year we’ve grown in audience, we’ve grown in relationships

with businesses and we’ve grown with other arts organizations across the state,” Jennings said. “As filmmakers left our community with a really great experience, they’ve done nothing but spread the word about how great our little festival is and how supportive our community is.”

After a decade of growth and losing the Granada Theatre as its premiere venue early this year, the EOFF needs the space to expand, Jennings said. That’s where the Liberty comes in.

“Our intent is to work with the Liberty Theater Foundation and become a fundraising wing in equipping the Liberty with (cinema) tools once it’s operational,” he said. “Once that’s in place, we’ll have another art house cinema that can be used for all sorts of engaging programming from our organization and others.”

Although the future is uncertain, Jennings is optimistic. He feels as if he’s had to leap a large hurdle for the film festival almost annually, so the challenge of



Observer file photo

On its website, the Liberty Theater Foundation notes four of the six phases of renovations have been completed.

working out the logistics with the Liberty is no different. Through the Path to Liberty music series, Jennings hopes to call the community to action to help keep EOFF afloat for at least another decade. “We’ve put in 10 good years and we’re really looking for that kind of

(investment) from the community, essentially,” he said. “We’ve got a lot of great people who have helped with membership and sponsorship over the years, but there’s a good percentage of the community that I think could step up and really ensure that this continues to be what it can be.”

COLLINS

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Victim No. 1, who was Collins’ first accuser, said she met him the night of the crime. Victim No. 1 was with a small group of high school friends on Halloween night. They were trick-or-treating, she said, and Collins had tagged along. “He didn’t seem like he was trying to cause harm,” Victim No. 1 said on the stand.

The victim had known of Collins — but had not met him — because he had worked for her father, who owned a construction company.

Later, witness testimony said Collins stated he was getting back at Victim No. 1’s dad for firing him after just a couple of weeks at the job.

The victim said she and Collins had separated from the group of high school students after 8 p.m. but before her curfew at 9:30 p.m. They came to the side of a local church in Elgin where Collins had “kissed with force,” she said.

The victim testified she had not wanted Collins to kiss her and kept her teeth clenched when he tried to stick his tongue in her mouth. The assault continued and Collins and Victim No. 1 later returned to the group.

Schaeffer, cross-examined the witness who then said while Victim No. 1 seemed to be a little different after she came back to the group with Collins, she did not speak up about the assault and hadn’t said they should call the police.

“Collins had picked up (the victim in a playful way),” the witness said. “It seemed like they were having a good time. She had been smiling.”

Afterward, the witness said Victim No. 1 did not say they needed to call the police.

In this case, Collins was convicted of first-degree unlawful sexual penetration, first-degree sexual abuse and fourth-degree assault. He was acquitted of two counts of first-degree sexual abuse.

Victim No. 2’s assault happened in Elgin near the river during a gathering where they had a campfire going. Collins took the victim away from the group and made her lay down on the ground and assaulted her.

In this case, Collins was convicted of third-degree sodomy, two counts of second-degree sexual abuse and one count of contributing to the sexual delinquency of a minor. He was acquitted of first-degree rape, first-degree sexual abuse and first-degree sodomy.

Victim No. 3 was having a party while her parents were out of town. The victim was 16 years old at the time of the assault.

She testified Collins had not been personally invited to the party but knew someone who had been.

Victim No. 3 said the night of the party she was the most drunk she had ever been. She said she could barely stand and felt dizzy before she was assaulted. She said she would “never in a million years have sex with Corey Collins” if she had been sober.

The victim testified Collins had led her into her parents’ room and locked the door behind them. She said she was so drunk and dizzy, she went to lay down on the bed. When Collins was assaulting her, she said it was a surreal moment.

“Like I was watching this happen to me,” she testified.

On cross-examination, Schaeffer questioned why she had not called the police.

“You were never unconscious, (but) you never fought back?” Schaeffer questioned.

Victim No. 3 said she

didn’t think of calling the police.

“I was embarrassed,” she said.

Schaeffer said the victim hadn’t reported the assault until Victim No. 1 and No. 2 came forward.

“That’s when you said ‘rape,’” he said. “You were embarrassed? You thought you’d be stronger as a team.”

The victim repeated that would never have had sex with Collins if she had been sober.

“We live in a day and age where people don’t believe sexual assault victims,” she said.

Victim No. 3 said she decided to report the assault when Victim No. 1 came forward because she wanted to support the first victim and make sure Collins would not do this again.

In Victim No. 3’s case, Collins was found guilty of first-degree rape, first-degree sexual abuse and contributing to the sexual delinquency of a minor.

Victim No. 4 said she had met Collins when she was 14 years old and he was 18 years old.

“Eventually we started hanging out everyday,” she said.

Victim No. 4 said her relationship with Collins was a romantic one.

“He was persistent but never forced me (to have sex),” she testified.

She said she was 15 when she first agreed to have sex with Collins. The victim testified she had told Collins they should be careful because of her age. However, she said he was not worried about that and continued to pursue her. The sexual relationship lasted a couple of months, she said.

Victim No. 4 had testified the relationship was consensual, but she was underage at the time.

In this case, Collins was convicted of third-degree rape, second-degree sexual

abuse and contributing to the sexual delinquency of a minor.

Finally, Victim No. 5, who is now 19 years old, testified she shares a son with the defendant and had been engaged to him before he assaulted her.

Victim No. 5 said the night of the assault, she had not been feeling well. She and Collins were laying in bed in his trailer and Collins wanted to have sex with her, but she had said no multiple times. Despite that, Collins forced her, she said. She testified she found out she was pregnant weeks later. She said she was “confused, but at the same time excited.”

“Who is not excited when they find out they’re pregnant?” she said on the stand.

The timeline of Victim No. 5’s testimony was focused on as far as when she conceived.

However, Kenna Collins, Corey’s mother testified Victim No. 5 had already known she was pregnant at the time and had said she had not felt good due to morning sickness.

In Kenna’s account,

Corey’s trailer is right outside her bedroom window and had often heard the two fighting. She said she remembers Victim No. 5 calling Kenna to the trailer the next morning because Corey had been crying after he said “he felt like he had raped (Victim No. 5).”

Victim No. 5 wanted Kenna to explain to Corey that what had happened “wasn’t a big deal.”

Kenna told the young couple communication is key to any relationship and they need to get better at it if they were going to get married and have a child together. She said she told Corey sometimes Victim No. 5 would not feel good and would not want to have sex.

Kenna testified the couple could often be heard fighting inside the trailer.

In Victim No. 5’s testimony, she said during her relationship with Collins, he had not “necessarily (been) aggressive all the time.”

Schaeffer asked, despite the assault, why she stayed engaged to Collins.

“You didn’t call off the en-

gagement?” he questioned.

In the cross-examination Schaeffer questioned Victim No. 5 about the restraining order she had applied for against Collins. He asked the victim why she hadn’t reported Collins had sexually assaulted her within 180 days of the restraining order being filed despite there being a specific box referencing such an incident.

Victim No. 5 replied she had not done the math properly when she applied for the restraining order.

Kenna Collins testified she had witnessed her son and Victim No. 5 together during the time of the restraining order.

In Victim No. 5’s case, Corey Collins was found guilty of second-degree sexual abuse, third-degree sexual abuse, first-degree sexual penetration, first-degree sexual abuse, fourth-degree sexual abuse and was acquitted for three counts of first-degree sexual abuse.

Collins’ sentencing hearing will take place at 9 a.m. on March 22.

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ICC

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The water improvement project was recently completed, about four years ago after it began.

Also on Monday the council voted to appoint Clint Williams to fill its open Position 2 seat. Williams will succeed Robb Rea on the council. Rea served for about 20 years

before stepping down in January after he was elected mayor in November.

In other action, the city council voted to grant a social gaming permit to Lucky’s Place. The permit will allow dice, bingo and poker games to be played at the pub. The permit will not allow the restaurant to take a percentage of any of the money spent on dice games, bingo or poker.



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