

LIBERTY

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donations were the event's main money makers.

Jennings said the concert was a success in both fundraising and awareness efforts, although he does not want to disclose the full amount of money raised until the event series finale in April.

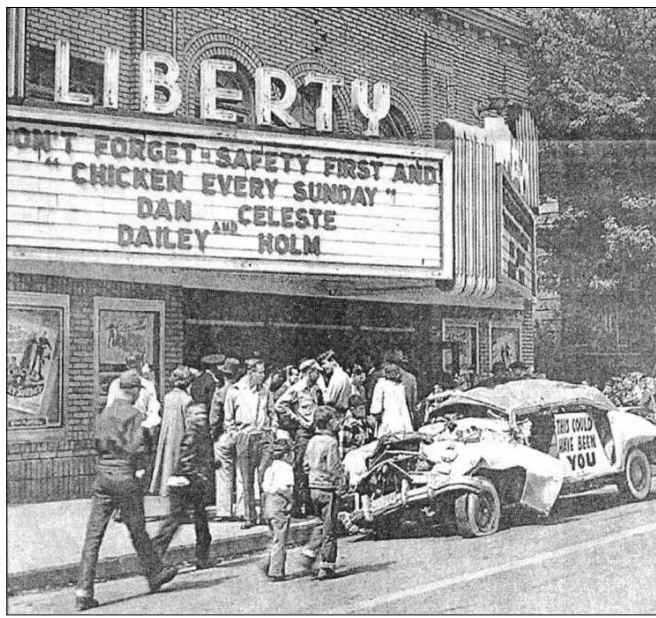
"We put a couple hundred in the coffer, and my goal is to get a thousand in the bank at the end of the event series," said Jennings, who is also a co-owner of hq. "In terms of awareness, some people came directly out of the music series to the film festival membership screening (Wednesday night). It's all about growing community."

The event series will continue 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. Both evenings, doors will open at 8 p.m. and the show will start at 9 p.m.

Although the foundation had not officially given him the go-ahead, Jennings said he didn't think he was over-hasty in his fundraising efforts for the Liberty because he has been in contact with foundation board members via email about his intentions.

"We're faster to move and more flexible with grassroots organization, while (the foundation) was focused toward getting their construction complete," he said. "For me, it's time to rally the troops behind (fundraising)."

Jaeger and the rest of the foundation's board were



Observer file photo

This 1950 photo shows the original Liberty's facade.

supportive of Jennings' fundraising plans at the meeting Tuesday night, where the film festival director made an appearance.

"We think it's a great idea (to equip the theater with a digital cinema system), but going forward we would have to figure out how that would work," Jaeger said. "We don't have an arrangement figured out yet, but as of right now, we'd like to work with them."

EOFF and the Liberty Theatre Foundation have rela-

tionship ties dating back seven or eight years to the days of Stage Door, a small venue in the back of the Liberty Theatre when its front still housed retail space. Even before those days, the foundation began focusing its efforts on restoring the theater to its former glory in order to have a hub for arts and entertainment in downtown La Grande.

"We want to make (programming) as flexible as possible, but the vision is for traveling musical groups to have a stop-off point when they travel from Portland to Boise for a performance that you might find in a larger city venue," Jaeger said. "The Liberty could also be a possible venue for orchestra, live and small stage performances, speaking events, community events, Shakespeare folks, you name it."

Jaeger said the theater's architectural plans currently show about 170 seats on the main floor, but the foundation will probably add a balcony with about 200 more seats during phase three.

At its next meeting the Liberty Theatre Foundation board plans to continue discussions on the details of the theater's construction and formalizing its relationship with EOFF.

"We have to wait a bit for weather, but we will be looking at the actual flow of the construction work with our contractor, and we're meeting with our builder to discuss construction plans," Jaeger said. "At the same time, we'll be discussing how the foundation will run the theater."

Despite the lack of a formal contract, EOFF and the Liberty Theatre Foundation have the same goal in mind — to facilitate arts and culture accessibility to the citizens of Northeast Oregon at large. ■



Courtesy photo

Members of the local SWAT team assisted in the arrest of Ronald D. Lee, who is being held on a charge of murder.

COVE

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court records. "They were in the process of divorcing," said Union County Sheriff Boyd Rasmussen.

The investigation into Williams' murder, which occurred Nov. 17, 2018, in Cove, was a lengthy process, according to the release.

The sheriff said hundreds of hours have been devoted to the investigation, headed by the case's lead detectives, UCSO Det. Jason McKaig and La Grande Police Department Det. Mike Harris.

"It wasn't steady, but it was consistent," Rasmussen said of what he called a "complex and taxing investigation."

The arrest was made

based on an indictment issued by a Union County Grand Jury after an investigation by the Union County Major Crimes Team. The Major Crimes Team consists of members from the Union County Sheriff's Office, the La Grande Police Department, the Oregon State Police and the Union County District Attorney's Office.

In November, The Observer reported Williams called 911 to report a man in her backyard at approximately 1:40 a.m. on the 17th. The dispatchers heard her confront the man and then heard a loud noise. Deputies and Troopers arrived within minutes and found Williams dead of one or more apparent gunshot wounds.

Rasmussen said when Williams was talking to dispatchers she told them "she might know who it was."

Rasmussen said he could not comment on what precipitated the homicide and noted that the investigation is ongoing. ■

BEHAVIOR

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He said the problems arise when students come to school without the skills needed to keep their emotions in check when they get frustrated. Some of the reason for this may be that children are experiencing difficulties in their lives outside of school that prevent them from being able to focus in the classroom.

"There are social, emotional and behavioral barriers for kids that make it harder for them to learn," Carpenter said.

The ability to cope with pressure is essential for succeeding in school and life.

"These skills are just as important as reading, writing and math," Carpenter said.

This is why the La Grande School District is beginning a three-tiered La Grande Culture of Care program. Tier I supports all students, each of which will receive instruction pertaining to responsibilities, relationships, composure and positive environments. Tier II students, those with higher needs, will receive additional help via counseling groups and student support, a behavior plan and more. Tier III students, those with the highest needs, will receive advanced support via the most appropriate services.

The La Grande Culture of Care program is aimed at helping all students who cause disruptions, not just those prone to emotional outbursts. They include students who will freeze when asked to do something by their teacher and will refuse to move.

"They will go into freeze mode and (often) curl up," Island City Elementary School Principal John Tolan said.

When this occurs, the student's classroom is first cleared. Next, school staff interact with the child and get the individual to walk out of the classroom, after which he or she receives counseling.

Tolan, said Island City's principal since 2002, said disruptive behavior like this was once virtually unheard of.

"We didn't have this 10 years ago," he said.

The principal said that such behavior may reflect problems away from school.

"Who knows what went on at home that day (before the they came to school)," Tolan said.

He noted that when students come to school when they are upset, little things can trigger emotional reactions.

Tolan said Island City Elementary is implementing a Conscious Discipline program in response to escalating behavior issues. The program provides teachers with the tools they need to recognize students who are dealing with traumatic circumstances like parents who are in prison or have substance abuse problems. He said it puts strategies in place to help staff recognize these problems.

Conscious Discipline also shows teachers how to best connect with these students so that the challenges they face do not provide learning roadblocks. An important part of this involves caring and compassion-filled classroom settings.

Larry Glaze, the InterMountain Education Service District's director of operations and former superintendent of the La Grande School District, believes these behavior patterns begin developing before children enter school. He said it is important that these children see behavioral specialists and early childhood counselors well before they begin attending school.

"This would get children going in the right direction," Glaze said. Monitoring what is going on in the lives of students is another means of possibility preventing classroom disruptions.

"You can't ignore what is going on in their heart before you try to help them learn," Carpenter said.

For instance, McKinney said that when he finds out about a student who has just experienced the trauma of something like losing a member of his or her immediate family, he contacts the school's counselor and they arrange for the student to receive extra support. ■

NEW HIRE

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ready apparent to me that the people in this area greatly care about their land, natural resources and rural communities," Crowley said.

Crowley is originally from Dallas, Texas, but he spent his youth in Boise, where he attended high school and earned a B.S. in biology from Boise State University. While in Burns, Crowley also participated as a member of the Oregon Invasive Species Council.

When he's not working, Crowley is a backcountry bow hunter and fisherman. He enjoys spending his free time explor-

ing and sharing the experience with his wife and their three boys.

"We are very excited to welcome Kris and believe his experience, skills and community spirit are a great fit for the position and Wallowa County," said Wallowa Resources Executive Director Nils Christoffersen.

Crowley hopes his work will be fruitful for the entire Wallowa County community.

"Hiring local contractors and supporting local landowners for on the ground work provides economic stimulus to the region and fosters local land stewardship," Crowley said. "I look forward to and expect great things in 2019." ■

CENSUS

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Each state is responsible for gathering the necessary information and in Oregon, there will be approximately 1,100 people working to collect the information.

She added there will be jobs locally available to those who apply and can pass a background check.

The census is important, she said, because it's the information collected that determines low-income need, school lunches for students, maintenance of roads, etc. It's federal information that shows the state's — and each community's need — for programs and grants.

The census will consist of 11 questions for every household to answer for every member of the household.

Bushore said many people are leery about giving information to the census takers and she wants people to know their fears are unfounded.

They do not care whether people are citizens or not. That's not why they're doing this. The census is required per the Constitution, she said.

The assumption is the citizenship will cause an undercount of the population since people are uncomfortable disclosing that information.

"We use census information to determine whether a community could use a hospital," she said. "We don't disclose personal information, but just use

them for statistics."

There will be several steps taken to collect the census numbers. The first will be a website set up to answer the questions starting March 23. Then a phone call will go out to collect those who have not responded to the website. Later, letters will be sent out to the households, and finally, for those who have not responded, enumerators will go to the households that are left.

She said the enumerators will be people in the region who are familiar with the area and the community.

"If we don't get an accurate count then we're only hurting ourselves," she said. ■

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