

# EOU hauls in awards



US wildlife officials may lift gray wolf protections, 2A

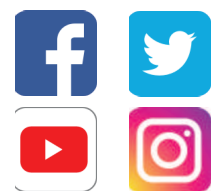
# THE OBSERVER

SERVING UNION AND WALLOWA COUNTIES SINCE 1896

**EOU Theatre** presents **THE ELEPHANT MAN**

This production rated 'R', it contains one scene of brief nudity.

March 7, 8, 9 & 15, 16, 2019  
7:00 PM  
at EOU in the Lyle Schwarz Theater  
Call 541-962-3757 or [www.eou.edu/theatre](http://www.eou.edu/theatre) for tickets



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Good day to our valued subscriber Florence Shaffer of Elgin

## Cove area residents exchange goodwill during tour of Vietnam

By Dick Mason  
The Observer

Four Cove area motorcyclists rolled into the past and reached out to the less fortunate during a recent visit to Vietnam.

The motorcyclists, Phil Hassinger and his adult sons, Jed and Seth, along with family friend Craig Schmitt, delivered 200 pounds of children's clothing to impoverished rural communities during a tour of northern Vietnam. The clothes, primarily sweaters, jackets and coats, were all donated by Union County residents.

Word of the party's arrival in the rural communities always spread rapidly.

"All of a sudden there would be a (friendly) mob. People would show up right away," Seth Hassinger said.

The Hassingers and Schmitt, who were making their tour with Mototours Asia,

also extended a hand to a rural hospital. With the assistance of trucks and vans in their caravan, their party brought six wheelchairs to a hospital in rural Vietnam. They are believed to be the first wheelchairs the hospital has had.

"(The hospital's staff) was just ecstatic," Phil Hassinger said, noting the entire staff came to see the arrival of the wheelchairs.

The Hassingers had picked up two of the wheelchairs at a Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Hanoi after making prior arrangements. The other four wheelchairs had been purchased by the Mototours Asia group leader.

Even though there are no speed limits and rough roads in rural Vietnam, riding motorcycles seemed to be relatively safe to Seth Hassinger because the party encountered



Craig Schmitt poses with some of the many Vietnamese people his party met during its motorcycle tour.

no accidents during their rides. However, riding motorcycles in cities such as Hanoi, Vietnam's capital, is hair-raising.

"Traffic in Hanoi has no rules. You have to learn to go with the flow," Seth Hassinger said.

His father agrees.

"They do not have real traffic control,"

Phil Hassinger said.

According to the World Health Organization website, "14,000 people lose their lives each year in Vietnam as a result of road traffic crashes, and motorcyclists account for a high proportion (approximately 59%) of the road traffic collisions in the country."

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Brittney Garcia, left, and Angie Brown are La Grande's Diet Doc. They are pictured here in their office is at 212 Fir St.

## La Grande's Diet Doc makes nutrition personalized

■ Let The Diet Doc help you get back on that New Year's Resolution diet wagon

By Amanda Weisbrod  
The Observer

Even though Union County still has mounds of snow refusing to melt and a thick layer of ice coating some streets, summer is approaching fast — there's less than three months left to get that summer bod you promised yourself you would work toward at the new year.

Maybe you've tried every diet on the internet and have even followed tips from friends and family, but nothing's

working. You just can't stick with it, so you give up instead of trying again.

Before you despair over failed diets and weight loss programs, know you aren't alone — there's someone right here in La Grande who can help.

Brittney Garcia, the owner and operator of The La Grande Diet Doc, wants to teach everyone she can how to eat nutritionally and lead a healthy lifestyle. The Diet Doc is a global franchise, and Garcia's operation in La Grande has consistently made the top 10 list out of the more than 150 locations worldwide for revenue since she opened her storefront at 212 Fir St. in October 2015. She thinks

See **Diet Doc** / Page 5A

## LHS students need help raising money for state competition

By Cherise Kaechele  
The Observer

Sixteen La Grande High School students are heading to state after winning the Oregon Mock Trial regional competition for the first time since the team was reinstated five years ago. They just have to find the funds to get them there.

The mock trial competition is an annual event where regional teams compete while arguing and defending a case. The students act as witnesses, defendants, attorneys — every facet of a regular case in a courtroom.

Calvin Smith, 17, is the president of the LHS mock trial team. This is his fourth and final year in the club. And his team finally made it state.

"We practice the whole shebang," Smith said of the fake cases.

Union County District Attorney Kelsie McDaniel is one of the team's advisers. McDaniel, Smith and the other students also had the help of LHS government teacher John Lamoreau, Brytney Stanley, Union County deputy DA, and Tiffany Hansen, who works in the juvenile department, to help them practice for the competition.

Smith said the team has practiced twice a week for most of the winter season. The case for this year's regional competition was a civil case (they alternate between civil and criminal) and the team had to know every fact about the case in order to be the prosecuting attorney and defense.

"That will continue for state," Smith said of the case.

The team will enact the same case at the state competition in Portland March 15-16, and this time the students will be competing with more than 14 other teams. They'll have three rounds to compete, and the

See **Mock Trial** / Page 5A

## Despite tensions, Cove City Council gets down to business

By Francisca Benitez  
The Observer

The monthly Cove City Council meeting got off to a rocky start when an opening statement by Mayor Delbert "Del" Little offended at least three council members.

In his opening statement, Little said he sensed a lack of confidence from the council. He reviewed his authorities as

mayor in the charter and reminded the council the voters of the City of Cove voted him into office.

"They had the confidence in me, evidently, to vote for me. I'm hoping down the line the council will develop a similar confidence and we'll be able to work better together and make decisions for the betterment of the city," he said.

He had asked no comments be made during his opening statement. As soon as he finished Councilman Matt McCowan, who was visibly upset, interjected.

"I do object to your lecturing of the council," he said.

McCowan suggested the meeting be immediately adjourned, but the other council members did not agree. McCowan then said he was leaving "before I say something I'm gonna really regret." He apologized to

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## New nonprofit looking for premises in La Grande

By Francisca Benitez  
The Observer

Community Kindness of Eastern Oregon is a brand new nonprofit organization in La Grande created by a couple who is determined to give back to their community.

Liz Meyer has lived in La Grande for 18 years. Liz and her husband, Grant, have volunteered for other nonprofits before but now have started their very own. Liz Meyer is now dedicating all of her time to help the community in any way she can as president of Community Kindness of Eastern Oregon.

"We want to step forward and help the community because we are so thankful for this community," she said.

Liz plans to open a thrift store to serve as the headquarters of the nonprofit. She is currently searching for a location and is collecting donations to fill the store once it opens.

Liz said she hopes the thrift store will also be a place for community gatherings like open mic nights and community dances. She has experience working with nonprofit thrift stores by volunteering for Barkin' Basement and

the La Grande ReStore.

Community Kindness, has a board with six members including Grant and Liz, and is registered as a nonprofit with the Oregon Secretary of State.

Liz said she hopes to benefit everyone she can with the nonprofit. She has already reached out to a number of local nonprofits, businesses and organizations ranging from the Youth in Transition program, which benefits children without homes, and Wildflower Lodge, which is a home for those with dementia and Alzheimer's. She has even reached out to veterinarians in the area to see how Community Kindness can benefit animals. Next on her list is finding a way to help local veterans.

"There's always something else," she said, "It's a matter of reaching out to the community, seeing what we can do for them and going from there."

Liz said although the nonprofit is still coming together, she is amazed by how fast things are happening. Liz and Grant began the process of creating the nonprofit in late

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### WEATHER

Full forecast on the back of B section

**Tonight**  
28 LOW  
Rain/snow showers

**Thursday**  
40/24  
Mostly cloudy

### CONTACT US

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