

Survey offers insight into realities of local teen drinking

By Scott Carpenter
For The Observer

Every year La Grande School District and our students have the opportunity to participate in the Oregon Healthy Teen or Oregon Student Wellness Survey. Students answer questions on a wide range of health topics that include: school climate, mental and emotional health, substance use, parenting and parenting attitudes, and personal or community safety factors. While students may be asked various demographic information to aid in developing survey results, students are never asked their names or other personally identifiable information to maintain the anonymous nature of the survey. Additionally, parents have the right to opt their student out of the survey, but most students enjoy the chance to honestly respond and see community results. As a district, we encourage all students to participate as the information is essential in helping us to know how best to serve students and meet their needs.

As an assistant principal at LHS, I was frequently asked questions about substance abuse at our high school. Community members and parents were concerned about a wide variety of substances in our community and how

these various trends impacted our student body and their families. While La Grande is a rural community, we have students who struggle with marijuana, tobacco, alcohol, large amounts of over-the-counter medications and methamphetamine that can result in any number of outcomes including hospitalization and premature death. Student use of vapes with marijuana or tobacco products has exploded and is increasing in our state, county and local schools. La Grande School District, law enforcement, Union County Safe Communities Coalition and various community agencies and partners frequently work together to help students avoid behaviors and addictions that impede their progress toward their brightest future.

Alcohol use in high school has been a problem for a long time. Stories of weekend parties, binge drinking and drunk driving have permeated our culture and can be readily seen in most movies that address adolescents. The truth is that most teenagers know who drinks regularly, where they can get alcohol, and where the next party or opportunity to drink will be. What is encouraging is that, according to the Oregon Student Wellness Survey, fewer and fewer students are choosing to drink and participate in at-risk behaviors commonly associated with regular

alcohol use/abuse.

In 2016, only 37.8 percent of 11th-grade students had never consumed alcohol. In 2018, that number increased to 42.3 percent (an increase of 4.5 percent), with 22.4 percent of students admitting to consuming alcohol within 30 days of taking the survey (a decrease of 5.5 percent since 2016). What is interesting is that most students believe friends and other students are drinking more regularly than they really are. In the 2018 survey, when students were asked their perception of other students drinking within their school, the majority responded they believed more than 80 percent of the student body had consumed alcohol in the last 30 days. The survey showed that only 22.4 percent of students had consumed alcohol in the last 30 days, a 57.6 percent overestimate of reality. A review of past surveys shows the same pattern of student use declining over time along with an increasing perception that “everyone else is doing it.”

While we may be winning the war against underage drinking in our community, two statistics are alarming. First, students who choose to drink are drinking more hard liquor (e.g., vodka, rum, scotch, bourbon or whiskey) than they have in past surveys with wine and beer usage declining. The use of hard liquors and the impacts on the adolescent

brain are concerning. Furthermore, the mixing of hard liquors and drugs or prescription medications increases the possibility of tragic consequences. Second, students were asked in the survey where they got the alcohol they consumed. A growing percentage indicated they got it from “a parent.” From 2016 to 2018, fewer students got alcohol at parties, from a 21-year-old, from an older sibling or a stranger, but rather went directly to a parent (a 3 percent increase in the last two years). Parents continue to be an essential component in helping their children stay safe by reducing their children’s and their friends’ access to alcohol.

La Grande School District, Safe Communities Coalition and our partners encourage families to help educate their students on the risks of underage drinking. While we may believe that “everyone is doing it” and popular culture supports that message, the data is clear that far fewer students are consuming alcohol regularly. While we have work to do, we appreciate parents, friends and siblings who have tough conversations and actively work to keep each other safe. Thank you for all your efforts. ■

Scott Carpenter is the director of educational programs for the La Grande School District and a member of the Union County Safe Com-

Warren graduates from basic



Submitted by Joint Hometown News Service

U.S. Air Force Airman Arthur J. Warren, a 2017 graduate of La Grande High School, recently graduated from basic military training at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, San Antonio, Texas. The airman completed an intensive eight-week program that included training in military discipline and studies, Air Force core values, physical fitness, and basic warfare principles and skills. Airmen who complete basic training also earn four credits toward an associate in applied science degree through the Community College of the Air Force.

Swalberg wins bingo jackpot



Gerald Hopkins photo

Julie Swalberg was the jackpot winner of a recent Elgin Lions bingo night, collecting \$530 on the extra soft card plays. An attendance record was set, with 18 basketball players from the Elgin team joining the games. Swalberg (right) accepts the cash from Lion President Kathy Oliver.

Union School District releases honor roll

Observer staff

UNION — The following students in 7th grade through 12th grade were named to the Union High School honor roll for the first semester of the 2018-19 academic year. To claim this distinction, students must have earned at least a 3.50 GPA on a 5.00 scale.

7th grade

Kaci Baxter 4.257, Marielle Graffunder 4.214, Jayda Blackburn 3.986, Lindsey Butler 3.971, Katy McCants 3.775, Mason Droke 3.70, Titus Davenport 3.65, Noah Wells 3.538, Gabriel Brandt 3.529.

8th grade

Jacob Burton 4.30, Danielle O'Reilly 4.30, Noah Platz 4.30, Samuel Baxter 4.043, Nicholas Baxter 4.029, Mary Baxter 3.986, Jazmyne Gonzales 3.80, Caleb Later 3.757.

9th grade

Audrey Hill 4.30, Audrey Wells 4.30, Kaylin Nowak 4.257, Callie Glenn 4.214, Virginia Kuhl 3.80, Angelina Brandt 3.714, Treyton DeFries 3.575.

10th grade

Adam Lewis 4.314, Riley Later 4.129, Keegan Glenn 3.914, Jace Phillips

3.914, Carter Blackburn 3.857, Kaylee Lantis 3.771, Sydney Antoine 3.743, Israel O'Reilly 3.714, Monte Kirby 3.67, Cole McLean 3.657, Jordan DeFries 3.557, Brooklynn Lathrop 3.514.

11th grade

Emilee Freeman 4.50, Rory Hill 4.50, Andrew Lackey 4.50, Jaimee Baxter 4.357, Hunter Coon 4.317, Jacie Kromwall 4.317, Brianna Kohr 4.314, Zachary Johnston 4.30, Ashlyn Baxter 4.171, Jaxon Blackburn 4.071, Tyler Olson 4.071, Kylie Bruce 3.986, Aubrey Sellick

3.843, Autumn Daggett 3.786, Gannon Carreiro 3.68, Tylar Daggett 3.657, River Sol 3.657, Anthony Goodwater 3.614, Hannah Bello 3.529, Cole Tobin 3.514.

12th grade

Abriel O'Reilly 4.50, Ruby Ferguson 4.24, Heather Haefer 4.20, Elizabeth Verhelst 4.12, Skylar Fitzpatrick 4.06, Crystal Marks 4.00, Dustin Smith 3.86, Eve Goodwater 3.833, Ashley Scott 3.80, Rosalyn Morton 3.66, Forrest George 3.575, Cheyenne Whipple 3.557, Colton Rickert 3.50. ■

Send us your Community item

Deadline: Noon Thursday

Forms: The Observer front desk has wedding, engagement, anniversary and birth forms.

Wedding: Item must run within six months of the ceremony.

Anniversary: 25th, 30th, 35th, 40th, 50th or more.

Birthday: Know of a Union or Wallowa county resident turning 75 or older? Let us know the date, time and place of the celebration and send a recent, good-quality photo.

Where Are They Now?

Know someone who has moved away and what he or she is doing? Word limit: 200. Include a good-quality photo.

Community scrapbook: The Observer can't get to every event in Union and Wallowa counties. But we can make space available for those groups that take photos of their events and gatherings.

Reach us:
• Mail: 1406 Fifth St., La Grande, OR 97850
• Email: news@lagrandeobserver.com
• Call: 541-963-3161.

Exercise your body, mind and creativity at the library in April

New movement classes are now being offered at Cook Memorial Library. After the ongoing Gentle Yoga class — which is free and for adults, held from noon to 1 p.m. on Wednesdays (except the second Wednesday of the month) — a new Vinyasa/Active Yoga class will be held from 1:15 p.m. to 2:15 p.m. Both yoga classes are free and for adults, taught by Kitia Chambers. Participants should wear comfortable clothing. Some mats and chairs are provided. No registration or experience is required.

The second new class is Ballet Basics for adults. Ballet Basics is a free class



OFF THE SHELF
ROSE PEACOCK

focusing on ballet fundamentals for the beginning adult. The one-hour class will be held at 5:15 p.m. on Tuesdays from April 9 to May 28. Registration is required for the ballet class only.

Also for adults, the Page Turners book club will meet at 1 p.m. April 9 in the Archives Room. The book for April is the novel “Chariot on the Mountain” by Jack Ford.

Foreign Film Friday in April is on the 12th at 7 p.m. Watch a 2016

Irish film, “Sing Street,” in which a young teen in 1980s Dublin forms a band to impress his crush.

The library’s third annual Peeps Diorama Contest is underway. The contest will run April 8-12 and is open to all ages. Pick up an entry form and rules at the library, or download the form from our Facebook page.

Teen Writing Circle meets from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. on April 11 and 25. Make Dragon Eggs at iCraft at 4 p.m. April 19. The middle school book club meets at 3:30 p.m. on the first Thursday of the month. The high school book club meets at 4:30 p.m. the same day. Contact Celine

for details. Teen events are open to those in middle and high school.

Toddler Time is on Mondays at 10:20 a.m. Little ones age 14 months to 4 years and their caregivers are invited to sing, dance and play at this weekly event. Children’s LEGO club for age 5-12 is on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. Children’s Storytime includes crafts every Thursday at 10:30 a.m. Baby Tot Bop, for those 3 years old and younger, is held Friday mornings at 10:30. All children’s events take place in the Community Room.

Children ages newborn to age 5 may be signed up for the Dolly Parton Imagination Library online or at the library. Participants receive a free book in the mail each month through their fifth birthday. Also for age 5 and younger, Ready2Learn library cards are available. Every month the card is used, the child is automatically entered into a prize drawing.

The Literacy Center offers tutoring to all ages. Hours are 2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Call for an appointment, or drop in.

The library encourages community members to

participate in a city-wide reading challenge, “Read Together La Grande,” to reach a shared goal of one million minutes of reading. Go to cityoflagrande.beanstack.org to sign up or download the Beanstack Tracker app for Android or iOS.

Cook Memorial Library is open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Thursday, from noon to 6 p.m. on Friday, and from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday.

Visit us at 2006 Fourth St., La Grande, or call us at 541-962-1339. Find out more on our website, cityoflagrande.org/library and Facebook page. ■



Reed & Associates for excellent service LOCALLY!



An Independent Insurance Agency

Medicare, Auto, Home insurance and Annuities



Nicole Cathey

10106 N. 'C' • Island City

541-975-1364

Toll Free 1-866-282-1925

www.reed-insurance.net

Kevin Reed