



Sports

# LHS softball repeats

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Never mind the name, TB

# THE OBSERVER

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Good day to our valued subscriber Mandy Treanor of La Grande

## Flower donation gives residents a lift

By Dick Mason  
The Observer

Many seniors at Wildflower Lodge are getting a chance to put their green thumbs to good use thanks to La Grande Middle School students.

Many of the flowers grown by the students for the annual LMS Plant Sale were recently donated, following the encouragement of students, to Wildflower Lodge Assisted Living and Memory Care, a facility in La Grande.

About six pickup-truck-loads of flowers were donated. The flowers included marigolds, zinnias and coleus varieties. The flowers were planted in boxes and flowerbeds, many in Wildflower's courtyard.

Jenna Wright, Wildflower's community relations director, said residents welcomed the chance to plant the flowers and care for them because of their backgrounds.

"A lot of them were farmers or (grew) gardens and flowerbeds," Wright said.

Residents who have enjoyed planting the flowers include Patty Hukari.

"I want to make it pretty for all residents," Hukari said.

Wright said Wildflower can make planting opportunities available to residents on a small sale on its own but not to the extent it did this year with help from LMS.

Plants grown by LMS students were also donated to Kids Club at Riveria Activity Center and La Grande's community garden.

Kathy Nickerson, an LMS science teacher who helps direct the yearly plant sale, said the donations made by the school heighten the students' awareness of the needs of others.

"It is important for us to always look beyond ourselves," Nickerson said.

Students gain business experience via the annual project, selling the plants they've grown to the public.

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Ronald Bond/The Observer

Beckie's Studio tap dance students, from left, Leela Andrew, Brianna Brown, Alya Collins, Alexys McCall and Avie Durrant, practice Wednesday.

## Forty years of dancing

By Trish Yerges  
For The Observer

Beckie's Studio of Dance, 110 Depot St. in La Grande, founded by professional Portland dancer Beckie Thompson-Hendrickson, is celebrating its 40th anniversary.

The dance school teaches dance language, pre-ballet, ballet, pointe classes, beginning to advance Broadway tap lessons, jazz and hip-hop, senior company jazz, acrobatics and tumbling. The staff at the school includes Betsy Carson, Chelsie Musgrove and Heather Watson, all former students of Thompson-Hendrickson. All the advanced classes are personally taught by Thompson-Hendrickson, or "Teacher Beckie" as some students respectfully call her.

"The three teachers at my studio have been with me since they were little girls and are now in their mid-30s," said Thompson-Hendrickson. "Every year, two to three times a year, we travel outside of La Grande to take workshops and master classes, and they also take teacher training classes to continue teaching at my studio."

Thompson-Hendrickson



Ronald Bond/The Observer

Acrobatics and tumbling students Avery Myer (left), Ada Robinson (center), Alexys McCall (right) and Brianna Brown (back right) practice Wednesday afternoon.

founded her studio in 1979 when she moved to La Grande from Portland to raise her children away from the hustle and bustle of the city.

"It was a little bit of a cultural change for me coming here, but not long after I arrived, an opportunity to teach dance opened up

with the City of La Grande, and I applied for it," she said. "That same year I also opened my dance studio at 211 Fir Street."

There were four or five applicants for the job, and she was offered the position. She credits this, in part, to her having dance certificates, something she worked

hard to earn through her dance education.

"I've danced all my life, starting at age 3 with the Academy of Dance Arts, where I received my first certificate," she said. "I've earned other certificates since then from other schools."

Thompson-Hendrickson's  
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## Groups object to raven-poisoning plan

By Jayson Jacoby  
WesCom News Service

Some environmental groups are objecting to a state plan to poison up to 1,500 ravens in Baker County over three years in an effort to reduce the birds' predation on sage grouse eggs.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife in April 2018 applied for federal permits to kill the ravens, which are protected under the federal Migratory Birds Treaty Act.

The agency has not received permits from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, said Michelle Dennehy, an ODFW spokesperson.

The poisoning of ravens will not hap-

pen until 2020 at the earliest, she said.

Environmental groups including Oregon Wild, The Humane Society and the Center for Biological Diversity oppose the plan, according to a story in The Oregonian.

ODFW's proposed strategy is part of "an unfortunate pattern of wildlife agencies scapegoating one wildlife species for the decline of another" without addressing primary causes of decline, said Bob Sallinger, conservation director at the Portland Audubon Society.

Researchers have identified other potential causes of sage grouse population decline, including conversion of sagebrush land to agriculture, livestock

grazing, drought and West Nile virus.

Studies showing ravens' effect on sage grouse nesting were conducted in Nevada, and Oregon "has not produced adequate science to support killing ravens," Sallinger wrote on the Portland Audubon website.

Those studies showed that ravens were responsible for 53 percent of sage grouse nest failures in parts of Nevada. (Badgers were the second most common cause, at 25 percent, followed by coyotes at 14 percent.)

ODFW is focusing on Baker County because its sage grouse population has declined by an estimated 75 percent since

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### WEATHER Full forecast on the back of B section

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