

Fall brings new library director, new programming

Cook Memorial Library welcomes a new director, Kip Roberson, who will be starting on Oct. 14. Kip joins the library from Seattle.

Harvest Share returns this fall on Tuesdays from 10 a.m. to noon, with free produce for everyone. Harvest Share is in collaboration with the OHSU School of Nursing. Dates this fall are Oct. 8, 15 and 22 and Nov. 5, 12 and 19.

New children's programming for fall includes LEGO Play on Wednesdays at 3:30 p.m. Storytime is now on Fridays at 1:30 p.m. Baby Tot Bop, for those 3 years old and younger, is moving to Thursday mornings at 10 a.m. as of Oct. 3. Toddler Time is still Mondays at 10:20 a.m. for ages 14 months to 4 years.



OFF THE SHELF
ROSE PEACOCK

Check out our GO-STEM kits, part of the "Greater Oregon Science, Technology, and Math," regional partnership with EOU. Kits include components to explore STEM principles and education. We've also added Blocks Rock! STEM kits to the collection. These fun and colorful kits include blocks, a timer and cards for ages 4 and older to play competitive and educational games.

Children up 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. Ready-2Learn library cards are available for children age 5 and younger.

Teen Book Clubs, one for middle school age and one for high schoolers, will be held Oct. 3. Contact Celine for details. Writing Circle for teens is Oct. 10 from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. Paint a pumpkin at iCraft at 4 p.m. Oct. 18. Teen events are open to those in middle and high school.

Page Turners book club for adults meets the first Tuesday of the month at 1 p.m. in the Archives Room. The book for discussion on Oct. 8 is "The Courtship of Eva Eldridge" by Diane Simmons, who is originally from Eastern Oregon. Based on Eldridge's letters and

papers, this is a story of a woman drawn in by a bigamist's charm in post-World War II America.

Ballet Basics for adults is on Tuesdays from 12:10 p.m. to 1 p.m. This free, drop-in class explores the fundamentals of ballet to build grace, strength and flexibility in a low-key environment. Participants should wear workout apparel and ballet slippers, if possible.

Guided and silent meditation sessions are Wednesdays from 5:15 p.m. to 6 p.m. Led by Kitia Chambers, these sessions explore a variety of meditation and relaxation styles and techniques. No experience or registration is necessary.

Foreign Film Friday is Oct. 11 at 4 p.m. We will be screening the 2017 Israeli comedy "Holy Air," about a

man who goes into the biggest business in Nazareth: religion. Refreshments will be provided.

The Literacy Center is now open Tuesday-Thursday from 2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. for the school year. The center offers free tutoring for all ages.

Library hours are Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Friday, noon to 6 p.m.; and Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Visit us at 2006 Fourth St., La Grande, call us at 541-962-1339. Find out more on our website, www.cityoflagrande.org/library and Facebook page (search for Cook Memorial-La Grande Public Library).

Rose Peacock is a library technician at Cook Memorial Library.

Building bunk beds



Submitted photo

A host of Elgin Lions recently constructed bunk beds for Sleep in Heavenly Peace, a nonprofit organization that aims to ensure all children have a bed to sleep in. The Lions selected a visible site on main street for people passing through to see the project and stop and ask questions or make donations. In three hours, the volunteers completed six bunk beds to be given to children. New sheets, pillows and blankets were also collected for the kids.

Still going strong 74 years later



Dick Mason/The Observer

Members of the La Grande High School Class of 1945 met earlier this month at Island City City Hall for a 74th class reunion. Shown here are classmates John Turner, Arthur Bradley, Bob Madsen, Freda Herron, Jim Sams, Lois Henderson, LaDonna Horstman, Virginia Fenn and Aloha Botelho, Sandhon Morris a chief organizer of the reunion.

Prescription drugs, opioid misuse in Eastern Oregon

Eastern Oregon is no stranger to the opioid crisis, which reaches from Appalachia to Alaska. Union County is home to Oregon's second-highest opioid prescribing rate. According to the Oregon Health Authority, the rate was more than 280 opioid prescription fills per 1,000 residents from April through June 2019.

Short-term use of opioid medications for acute pain has proven beneficial through the years. However, use of opioids for longer durations for chronic pain or repeat acute injuries can lead to serious dependence issues even when patients follow their doctor's best intentions. As a result, the Eastern Oregon Coordinated Care Organization's Regional Opioid Prescribing Group (ROPG) meets quarterly in La Grande to discuss issues related to the manner in which medications are prescribed to patients in Eastern Oregon. The ROPG has been instrumental in directing proper prescribing habits by issuing opioid prescribing guidelines to regional providers in addition to opioid tapering protocols to help ease patients off of long-term opioid use.

Fortunately, Eastern Oregon, and much of the West Coast, has avoided the massive surge of deaths attributed to the opioid crisis that have been commonplace in areas such as West Virginia and Ohio, partially due to the delayed start of the crisis in the region and the increased availability of Naloxone as a lifesaving measure. This is not to say the crisis isn't worsening. Union County has seen an increase in patients enrolled in medication-assisted treatment, which typically consists of the medication Suboxone, said to be the gold standard in safely assisting patients through their opioid dependence. Suboxone can be compared to the many nicotine replacement therapies that

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help tobacco users taper off their nicotine dependence with greater success than simply quitting cold turkey. With that said, the increase in Suboxone prescriptions suggests a greater number of patients struggling to kick opioid dependence.

According to the CDC, the opioid crisis occurs in three main waves. The first wave, which Union County has confronted, is the prescription wave. The second wave is the heroin wave, and the third is the synthetic opioid wave often associated with fentanyl. Regional law enforcement has encountered both heroin and fentanyl, including fentanyl pills made to look like the pharmaceutical variety. The potency of fentanyl is especially troubling, ranging from 50 to 100 times more powerful than morphine.

Fentanyl's potency is what has led to a drastic increase in opioid-related overdose deaths nationwide. In 2017 the CDC listed opioid-related deaths at 61,000, about 50,000 more deaths than were attributed to methamphetamine. According to the CDC, 12 percent of all opioid-related deaths had methamphetamine present, and from 2017 to 2018 the number of opioid overdoses co-occurring with methamphetamine increased nearly 15 percent. This

trend will continue to require a multi-pronged approach.

After talking with community members, it is clear the opioid crisis goes much deeper. In May 2019, Northeast Oregon Network enlisted two OHSU nursing student interns to conduct 28 interviews with people from various settings in Eastern Oregon, including health care, mental health, social services, prevention, treatment, recovery, tribal and faith organizations. While these interviews indicated there are varying opinions on what caused the crisis, most agreed it is, indeed, a problem that affects us all in some way.

Most of the interviewees felt the problem runs so deep that it may never be entirely solved, but that it is currently shifting toward improvement and can get better. One of the biggest factors in that improvement, especially for those in recovery, is our small, close-knit community and support systems that exist among scarce treatment resources. Connection to resources, people and support are key in prevention and recovery.

October is Red Ribbon Month in Union County. Raise prevention awareness by making some of those connections. Have conversations with kids about the dangers of drug abuse, support their healthy choices and celebrate being substance free.

National Prescription Drug Take Back Day will take place at the La Grande Safeway from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Oct. 26. Turn in your unused or expired medicines for safe disposal. This event is a collaborative effort of the La Grande Police Department, Safeway Stores, Elkhorn Media Group and Union County Safe Communities Coalition.

BIRTHS

GRANDE RONDE HOSPITAL

BABCOCK:To Leeana Danae Barnes and Christopher Ryan Babcock, of La Grande, a son, Kingston Connor Barnes Babcock, 7 pounds 13 ounces, Aug. 20 at 11:03 p.m. Grandparents are Jerry and Gizete Babcock, Sharon Snyder and Eileen Babcock.

KOONTZ:To Heather Mae Grende and Kyle Craig Koontz, of Baker City, a son, Kayson Koontz, 8 pounds 10 ounces, Sept. 4 at 4:57 a.m. Grandparents are Ernie and Diana Grende and Don and Debbie Koontz.

MELLO:To Cayla Marie Mello and Christopher Scott Mello, of La Grande, a daughter, Malia Rose Mahealani Mello, 6 pounds 9 ounces, Sept. 13 at 11:04 a.m. Grandparents are Carrie and Jerry Weissert and Cathy and Joey Mello.

MEADERDS:To Belen Calderon and Joseph Andre Meaderds, of

La Grande, a son, Joseph Isaac Meaderds, 8 pounds 15 ounces, Sept. 10 at 11:26 p.m. Grandparents are Angelo Meaderds, Beatrice Meaderds, Raul Calderon and Nely Calderon.

PHELPS:To Tia Murrill and Taten Phelps, of Elgin, a son, Parker River Phelps, 6 pounds 10 ounces, Aug. 21 at 9 a.m. Grandparents are Mike and Sheila Phelps, Mark and Tina Howell, Jannette Murrill, and Justin and Jonna Bishop.

SANDOVAL:To Tonya Leann Robinson and Kyle Ray Sandoval, of La Grande, a daughter, Echo Grace Robinson Sandoval, 8 pounds 9.2 ounces, Sept. 13 at 7:40 p.m. Grandparents are Stacie and Dane Sandoval, Shannon Robinson and Jefferey Dehart.

SPANGLER:To Karyanne Spangler and Scott Andrew Spangler, of La Grande, a daughter, Lynlee June

Spangler, 7 pounds 5 ounces. Grandparents are Linda and Ron Spangler and Melody and Jim Joice.

STEVENS:To Bethany Stevens and Nathan Stevens, of La Grande, a son, Kodiak Joseph Stevens, 8 pounds, Sept. 5 at 12:19 p.m.

WYANT:To Cheyanne Moon Wyant and Joseph Dean Furgerson, of La Grande, a daughter, Araya Sunshine Wyant, 8 pounds 11 ounces, Aug. 20 at 1:28 a.m. Grandparents are Dennis and Cindy Wyant.

ZYLA:To Katherine Lynn Dickenson and Michael Joseph Zyla, of Elgin, a son, Hunter Zyla, 6 pounds 9 ounces, Aug. 22 at 7:17 a.m. Grandmother is Amanda Hagen.

WALLOWA MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

MAHON:To Lisa Mahon and Drew Mahon, of Wallowa, a daughter, Bailey Marie Mahon, 6 pounds

9.5 ounces, Sept. 22 at 5:10 a.m. Grandparents are Karen and Brian Cron and Kathy and Mike Mahon.

MANCA-BROWN:To Bridget Brown and Gabriel Manca, of Enterprise, a daughter, Iris Frost Manca-Brown, 7 pounds 1 ounce, Sept. 24 at 8:08 a.m. Grandparents are Suzi and Glenn Brown, John Manca and Leslie Dressel, and Ann and Brad Smith.

NOYES:To Kristen Noyes and Mark Noyes, of Wallowa, a daughter, Meredith Joan Noyes, 8 pounds 13.8 ounces, Sept. 18 at 11:09 a.m. Grandparents are Stephanie Tompeck and Janet and Richard Noyes.

ODOM:To Ashley Odom and Andrew Odom, of Enterprise, a daughter, Pepper Lillie Odom, 7 pounds 1.5 ounces, Sept. 18 at 7:40 a.m. Grandparents are Laura and Tom Beach and Marilyn Odom.

OTTEN:To Patricia Otten and Corey

Otten, of Enterprise, a daughter, Ellie Marie Otten, 7 pounds 6.5 ounces, Aug. 27 at 5:09 a.m. Grandparents are JoAnn O'Leary and Shirley and Donald Otten.

SMITH:To Linzi Smith and Rowdy Smith, of Enterprise, a daughter, Zayda Jane Smith, 7 pounds 6.5 ounces, Sept. 16 at 8:15 a.m. Grandparents are Joni and Randy Strohm and Donna and John Smith.

OUT OF TOWN

WILLIAMS:To Kelsey (Skeen) Williams and Ryan Williams, of Redmond, a son, Sterling Wyatt Williams, 6 pounds 4 ounces, July 3 in Bend. Grandparents are Steve and Gayla Skeen of Union, Lenny Williams of Lopez Island, Washington, and Rhonda and Mike Puckett. Great-grandmother is Lawanda Laing of Cove.



Nicole Cathey

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