

## DAILY PLANNER

### TODAY

Today is Monday, Nov. 18, the 322nd day of 2019. There are 43 days left in the year.



### TODAY'S HIGHLIGHT

On Nov. 18, 1999, 12 people were killed when a bonfire under construction at Texas A&M University collapsed.

### ON THIS DATE

In 1883, the United States and Canada adopted a system of Standard Time zones.

In 1916, the World War I Battle of the Somme pitting British and French forces against German troops ended inconclusively after 4-1/2 months of bloodshed.

In 1963, the Bell System introduced the first commercial touch-tone telephone system in Carnegie and Greensburg, Pennsylvania.

In 1978, U.S. Rep. Leo J. Ryan, D-Calif., and four others were killed in Jonestown, Guyana, by members of the Peoples Temple; the killings were followed by a night of mass murder and suicide by more than 900 cult members.

In 1991, Shiite Muslim kidnappers in Lebanon freed Anglican Church envoy Terry Waite and Thomas Sutherland, the American dean of agriculture at the American University of Beirut.

In 1999, a jury in Jasper, Texas, convicted Shawn Allen Berry of murder for his role in the dragging death of James Byrd Jr., but spared him the death penalty.

In 2003, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court ruled 4-3 that the state constitution guaranteed gay couples the right to marry.

### LOTTERY

**Megabucks:** \$6.2 million  
9-14-16-17-21-30

**Mega Millions:** \$192 million  
12-19-34-35-68-20-x2

**Powerball:** \$80 million  
14-22-26-55-63-26-x3

**Win for Life:** Nov. 16  
7-27-44-59

**Pick 4:** Nov. 17  
• 1 p.m.: 7-3-1-6  
• 4 p.m.: 4-3-1-4  
• 7 p.m.: 4-9-7-0  
• 10 p.m.: 9-0-4-5

**Pick 4:** Nov. 16  
• 1 p.m.: 9-3-6-9  
• 4 p.m.: 9-6-7-2  
• 7 p.m.: 6-8-9-6  
• 10 p.m.: 9-8-5-7

**Pick 4:** Nov. 15  
• 1 p.m.: 8-1-4-5  
• 4 p.m.: 0-6-8-0  
• 7 p.m.: 6-7-5-1  
• 10 p.m.: 4-3-9-9

### NEWSPAPER LATE?

Every effort is made to deliver your Observer in a timely manner. Occasionally conditions exist that make delivery more difficult.

**If you are not on a motor route,** delivery should be before 5:30 p.m. If you do not receive your paper by 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, please call 541-963-3161 by 6 p.m.

**If your delivery is by motor carrier,** delivery should be by 6 p.m. For calls after 6, please call 541-975-1690, leave your name, address and phone number. Your paper will be delivered the next business day.

### QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Few people can see genius in someone who has offended them."

— Robertson Davies,  
Canadian author



Courtesy photo

Elgin native Jennifer McClure-Spurgeon and her care team as she goes through her cancer treatment. McClure-Spurgeon is the daughter of retired Union County Commissioner Steve McClure of La Grande and Jackie McClure of Wallowa.

## Elgin alumna battles cancer

By Trish Yerges  
For The Observer

WESTON — Jennifer McClure-Spurgeon knows what it's like to battle cancer. She's been struggling with the disease since her first diagnosis in February 2013 when it was discovered she had stage 1B cervical cancer.

McClure-Spurgeon's most recent recurrence of cancer was diagnosed last December. Her treatment was a laparoscopic radical hysterectomy with the removal of nearby lymph nodes. Since then, McClure-Spurgeon, 46, has been going to her exams as ordered by her oncologist and receiving a clean bill of health.

"At my five-year checkup, I was considered statistically normal," she said. "I was no more likely to have a recurrence than someone having cancer for the first time."

It certainly looked like a victory for her. However, four months later, she experienced severe abdominal pain and an intestinal blockage. That's when it was discovered there was a 6-centimeter tumor pushing against her colon. This came as a surprise to her and her care team.

"This led me to believe that (residual) cancer cells were left there due to the kind of surgery I had, or maybe I was just unlucky," she said. "New studies show that patients who have the laparoscopic hysterectomy have a 5% greater chance of cancer recurrence than those who get an open abdominal hysterectomy."

A biopsy last December revealed recurring cancer.

"With tumor sizes over 3 centimeters, survival rates are really poor," said McClure-Spurgeon, who is the mayor of Weston. "But because it hadn't spread beyond the abdominal cavity, that changed that prognosis (to something more hopeful)."

Surgery in January removed the tumor. She started chemotherapy in March — once a week for six weeks — followed by 32 sessions of radiotherapy in the Tri-Cities. The side effects of the radiation therapy were hard to endure, McClure-Spurgeon said. She experienced intestinal burning, required two kidney sur-

### Taco feed, auction raise funds for McClure-Spurgeon

A taco feed will be held at the Elgin Community Center between 5 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. Nov. 23 followed by a pie auction at 6:30 p.m. with all proceeds going to support McClure-Spurgeon, an Elgin alumna.

Her friends Connie and Glen Carter offered to organize the taco feed and pie auction benefit at the Elgin Community Center. This is just their latest demonstration of loyal friendship, McClure-Spurgeon said.

"The whole process is humbling, to know you are that well cared for," she said. "I can't begin to describe the gratitude I feel for Connie and Glen for wanting to put this together."

Connie Carter especially has a deep-rooted connection with Jennifer. "I went to Elgin High School with her," she said. "We've been friends forever." Connie Carter planned the taco feed and pie auction at an opportune time for the public.

"It's the weekend before Thanksgiving, so who doesn't need a pie for Thanksgiving, right?" she said.

The Carters are planning on an attendance of 200 people, "so it will be first come, first serve." The \$1 hard-shell beef tacos will be served buffet style, where people can add their own choice of toppings, including lettuce, cheese, tomatoes and onions. There will also be Pepsi beverages on hand for purchase. Following the meal will hold the pie auction.

"We'd like people to donate pies to auction off," Connie said. "If you would like to do that, please bring them to the Elgin Community Center between noon and 4 p.m. on Saturday, and then we'll know how many we have to auction off"

All of the proceeds will go toward the exorbitant costs of cancer treatment, especially the medical deductibles that compound over time, and medical transportation costs to and from Seattle, Tri-Cities and Walla Walla.

"All those things just add up quickly," Connie Carter said.

"We invite everybody to come out and support Jennifer and her family as she goes through this difficult time in her life," Glen Carter said.

— Trish Yerges, For The Observer

geries and suffered dangerous bacterial infection in the colon.

"It was just an agony to drag myself to radiation treatments," she said.

A follow-up CT scan in July showed no evidence of disease, but two weeks after her six-month checkup, she was back in the hospital when subsequent imaging revealed a 10-centimeter tumor on her liver with lymph node involvement and a small spot on her lung.

Her oncologist started her on a new course of chemotherapy this month with breaks as needed. McClure-Spurgeon will have chemotherapy infusions every three weeks in Seattle and blood tests 10 days after each infusion to monitor liver and kidney function. If this goes well, the oncologist may gradually add two other drugs to her treatment protocol.

"I have to believe that I can be one of those 11% who survive," she said.

"Someone has to be part of that 11%, why not me?"

McClure-Spurgeon is the daughter of retired Union County Commissioner Steve McClure of La Grande and Jackie McClure of Wallowa. She was raised in Elgin and graduated in 1990 from Elgin High School. She earned a degree in art history at Whitman College, where the 6-foot-3 athlete played basketball and became the first Whitman women's player to earn the National Collegiate Athletic Association All-American honors.

She and her husband, Dave, live in Weston, where they run a family business in real estate appraising. They have raised two daughters and have a son living at home, who is a freshman at Weston High School. In addition to the family business and her role as mayor, she has other community occupations she put on hold while giving attention to her rigorous cancer treatment regimen.

## Traffic stop lands two in jail on drug charges

Observer staff

ISLAND CITY — A traffic stop Friday in Island City led to the seizure of drugs and guns and two arrests, including a Stanfield woman wanted on a warrant.

The Union County Sheriff's Office in a news release reported deputies and detectives stopped the vehicle at 11:20 p.m. on the 11600 block of Island Avenue near the Walmart store. The team searched the vehicle and seized heroin, methamphetamine and oxycodone and two firearms.

Deputies arrested the two

occupants: Matthew Carter Cootie, 30, of La Grande, for carrying a concealed firearm and possession and delivery of heroin; and Josie Lee Pritchard, 30, of Stanfield, for possession and delivery of methamphetamine, heroin and oxycodone plus felon in possession of a weapon and giving false information to law enforcement.

The sheriff's office also arrested Pritchard on a Umatilla County warrant. State court records show Pritchard in August cut a deal in Umatilla County and pleaded guilty to two

counts of conspiracy to deliver heroin, a Class A felony. Circuit Judge Jon Lieuallen sentenced her to five years of probation.

But on Oct. 7, according to court documents, Lieuallen issued a warrant for her arrest after she violated multiple terms of her probation, including skipping out on drug abuse treatment and not using illegal drugs.

Cootie and Pritchard are in the Union County Jail, La Grande. Cootie's bail is \$10,000, according to the jail's online inmate roster,

and Pritchard's is \$50,000.

The sheriff's office also reported receiving assistance in this case from La Grande police, Oregon State Police and other agencies.

## School district responds to threat

By Sabrina Thompson  
The Observer

School attendance dipped on Nov. 15 in the wake of a reported school threat. La Grande School District Superintendent George Mendoza said the recent threat against the high school was determined not to be credible.

The concern came Nov. 7 when an anonymous message was found on a graphing calculator, indicating a student was unhappy with the school and warned people not to come to school Nov. 14. Mendoza said the school district launched an investigation with local law enforcement, per district protocol.

Once the district receives or identifies a threat or concerning comments, staff then investigate and evaluate the seriousness to determine the danger it poses, recognizing that all threats are not the same. The district considers and implements interventions to reduce risk of harm or violence, shares resources and communicates with students and staff, and raises awareness for available support systems and reporting tools. Lastly, there is follow-up to assess, monitor and support all resources and interventions applied.

"Our investigation process deals with facts that are discovered in real time," Mendoza said. "We work hand-in-hand with law enforcement. We need evidence to support credible threats as well as concerning comments. We also need to take practical and reasonable precautions to ensure the safety of all staff and students."

The school district alerted parents of students there was no cause for concern and that school would go on as normal. However, according to La Grande Middle School Principal Kyle McKinney, absences were double what they regularly are at the middle school on Nov. 14. High school Principal Brett Baxter did not respond to requests for comment before publication about the threat.

While the school district and LGPD determined there was no danger to students and staff because the message did not indicate a specific plan or threat of action, the investigation is ongoing. The district is asking anyone with additional information to come forward and share using the Safe Oregon tip line 844-472-3364 or by contacting the La Grande Police Department or the Union County Sheriff's Office.

As a precaution, the presence of law enforcement throughout the district was increased in response to this threat, according to Mendoza.

"The district needs to follow a reasonable and measured approach to all safety concerns," Mendoza said. "We don't want to overreact or underreact and need to keep safety as our paramount duty and responsibility."

## THANKSGIVING Dinner

Community Connection Nutrition Department is once again providing Thanksgiving Dinners that will serve a family of 4 for \$35.00. These are designed for those families that are too busy to cook and there is no work for you! These meals also make wonderful gifts for those families that are struggling.

Contact Sydney Gleeson @ Community Connection  
Community Connection of Northeast Oregon, Inc.  
**541-962-5851**



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