



# THE OBSERVER

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Good day to our valued subscriber Alta Halliday of La Grande

## Bylenga seeks House seat

■ PSU student seeks Democratic nomination for District 58

By Antonio Sierra  
 EO Media Group

PENDLETON — Nolan Bylenga arrived back in Pendleton early Wednesday morning after finishing his last set of finals at Portland State University, and he still had multiple essays to turn in before the end of the week.

Amid all that, he declared his candidacy for the state House District 58 Democratic primary.

Republican Bobby Levy of Echo announced her candidacy for the seat on Tuesday, but Bylenga was the first to file for the seat on Dec. 5.

A 22-year-old PSU senior and Pendleton High School alum, Bylenga will attempt to flip a seat that's been dominated by Republicans for decades.

In explaining why he was running for office, Bylenga cited Barack Obama's keynote speech at the 2004 Democratic National Convention: "The Audacity of Hope." Bylenga said he would like to bring a sense of hope to the district.

Despite his youth, Bylenga is already well-traveled.

A standout on the Pendleton High School track team, he initially attended the University of Florida to run for the Gators.

But after an injury, he decided to transfer to a college closer to home. After stints at Lane Community College and the University of Oregon, he was recruited to run track for Portland State, although he ended up injuring himself again.

A political science major at PSU, Bylenga holds some views that run against the grain of the Democratic Party. Bylenga expressed

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Bylenga

# TAKING ON AMAZON

■ Local retailers share important steps for competing with online Goliath



Staff photo by Dick Mason

John Appleton fine-tunes a bow Thursday afternoon at Alpine Archery and Fly, La Grande. Helping customers make sure their equipment is correct helps the small business take on online retailers such as Amazon.

By Dick Mason, The Observer

*LA GRANDE — The rule is one John and Anieta Appleton, the owners of Alpine Archery and Fly, almost never breaks.*

Since purchasing their archery shop 4-1/2 years ago, the Appletons have made sure every customer purchasing a bow does not leave without first testing it.

"We want to make sure they are comfortable with it and that it meets their needs," John Appleton said.

John and his wife, Anieta, have an easy time finding a test site — a 16-lane, 20-yard archery range that is part of their La Grande shop.

The range they provide for patron use and their test policy are evidence of the Appletons' focus on customer service, an important arrow in their quiver as they compete against Amazon, the online giant that retailers face each Christmas season and year-round, one which has more than \$200 billion in



Staff photo by Dick Mason

Whit Hartz of Mountain Works Bicycles, La Grande, does repair work on a bicycle Wednesday afternoon. The small business relies on customer service to compete with the likes of Amazon.

annual sales. John Appleton, like many local store owners, believes reaching out to customers is more critical now than ever.

"Nothing beats customer service," he said.

Appleton said archers who shop on Amazon will find equipment that is

*"We think of ourselves as a service business that also sells retail products."*

— John Appleton, owner of Alpine Archery and Fly

less expensive than what Alpine Archery sells. However, in the long run, those purchasing bows from Amazon will end up spending more than if they came to Alpine. Archers who buy bows at his shop do not have to pay for assembly, he explained, unlike those who get theirs from online retailers like Amazon who have to pay an extra fee that can drive the total cost higher than what would have been paid by shopping at Alpine.

"If they had purchased

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## Curling up with a good book

By Sabrina Thompson  
 The Observer

LA GRANDE — When the weather gets cold and the nights come earlier there are few things better than curling up with a good book and a nice warm drink. Don't know what to read? Local bookstore owners and library staffs share their winter reading recommendations.

### Children's books

"Reading is a great way to learn new things and open up our imaginations to unlock new worlds," said Carrie Bushman, children's services staff member at La Grande's Cook Memorial Library. "It's an easy way to connect in a world where we are losing our human connections. Spark a new interest, bond over a favorite story from your childhood with your own children, or just curl up with a blanket, hot cocoa, and let the snow fall outside while you go on a journey in your mind."

Bushman's suggestions for children's books include fiction and nonfiction on a variety of topics. "A Big Bed for Little Snow" by Grace Lin tells the story of a little boy who can't resist jumping on the warm winter bed his mother made him. "I Just Ate My Friend" by Heidi McKinnon is a story about the search for friendship and belonging.

For children a little more advanced in their reading, Bushman suggested, "The Good Thieves" by Katherine Rundell. The inspirational story is one of adventure and determination.

A classic novel suggested by Mike Maszk from Looking Glass Books was A. A. Milne's "Winnie-the-Pooh," as it brought back happy memories for the store owner.

"My grandma called me Pooh as a child, so it always reminds me of her," Maszk said. "It is already a favorite of my 8-month-old daughter. It is a wonderful story full of friendship, love and kindness — all good reminders of what is important during the holiday season."

### Young adult books

For students in middle school and high school who want to get away from their assigned academic reading, Pendleton Public Library and Cook Memorial Library shared their suggestions for books to read for pleasure.

"A Winter's Promise" by Christelle Dabos takes the reader on an adventure with a runaway who can travel through mirrors. Pendleton's youth services librarian Briana White suggested this first book in the series along

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## La Grande hospital honors lives lost

■ Grande Ronde Hospital's Home Health and Hospice holds inaugural Remembrance Ceremony

By Sabrina Thompson  
 The Observer

LA GRANDE — Grande Ronde Hospital's Home Health and Hospice held an inaugural Remembrance Ceremony Thursday night to honor those whose lives were lost.

Families who had loved ones die in hospice or while receiving home health care from GRH this year received a token of remembrance in

the form of an angel ornament with the person's name attached.

More than 75 ornaments hung on the Tree of Light, according to Ann Schaefer, a licensed clinical social worker with the hospital. The tree stands in the GRH Pavilion at 909 Adams Ave., the new Home Health and Hospice headquarters.

"This year we are un-decorating the tree and giving those who lost

someone a little piece of them back," Schaefer said.

Former home health care director Marge Addleman was at the ceremony. Addleman lost her husband, Ray Addleman, on Christmas morning 2018.

"It's sounds silly, but it's him, it represents him," she said about the ornament.

Addleman, like others with family members in hospice or utilizing home health services, recalled a fondness for those who worked

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

Friday 30 Low Thickening clouds  
 Saturday 40/24 Mostly cloudy  
 Sunday 37/24 Cloudy

### CONTACT US

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 La Grande, Oregon

MONDAY ANOTHER ENTRY TO HOUSE 58 RACE

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