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THE OBSERVER

Weekend
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Good day to our valued subscriber Janice Roberts of La Grande

Elgin

‘Grease ball’ clogs pipes

■ Pipe problem has city and local business at odds

By Sabrina Thompson
The Observer

ELGIN — A giant grease ball or old pipes have the city of Elgin and the property owners of 795 Alder St. at odds over who should pay for work done by the city’s public works department.

The city claims the landowners and renter are responsible for the damage to the pipe, but Laura and Richard Parsons, who own the property, and David and Theresa Fuhrman, who run Cowboy and Angel’s Place in the rented building, assert the 60-year-old pipes were just worn down.

“They had to dig several holes because they couldn’t find where the pipe was,” Laura Parsons said. “I don’t think that main line was ever inspected.”

In May 2014, the Parsons purchased the Elgin property. Prior to the purchase, the pipe was connected to a hotel, pizza parlor and a soap store on the property. In 2015, the Furhmans opened their restaurant on the site. There were problems with the plumbing when they moved in, according to Theresa Fuhrman.

But the disagreement with the city began in January 2018, according to a statement from the city.

Before the city was involved, David Fuhrman said, there were issues with the sewage, and they hired a plumber through Walter Plumbing to do repairs. When the issues continued, the city’s public works department got involved and began an investigation. A crew had permission from the public works director to fix the problem if they could.

“It was determined that the plugged line was between the main line and the property, and that there

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La Grande High School



Staff photo by Sabrina Thompson

Maia Vandervlugt (left) portrays councilor Frida, ex-stepmom to Oliva, who is portrayed by Emily Wilson (right) in the La Grande High School production of “Human High School,” an original play by La Grande High teacher Kevin Cahill.

PRODUCTION: Alien invasion hits LHS

■ ‘Human High School’, an original play, premieres March 12-14

By Sabrina Thompson, The Observer

LA GRANDE — Ten years ago, La Grande High School teacher Kevin Cahill wrote “Human High School,” a play about aliens and high school students. After the play’s first performance, he shelved it.

“Human High School” makes its second debut March 12-14, starting at 7 p.m. each night at the La Grande High School Auditorium.

“The play is a sci-fi drama,” Cahill said, “and film buffs will be reminded of classic B movies, particularly ‘Invasion of the Body Snatchers,’ in that it is a very similar story line.”

The play unfolds at Human High School, an educational institution that has been taken over by aliens. The show follows three students and their guidance counselor as they fight off a full invasion. There are some differences in this production compared to the one from a decade ago, primarily due to changes he made to the script during rehearsals.

“When I reopened the play, I decided to tinker with it and rewrote a portion of the play,” Cahill said. “Doing this, I think, gives the students a window into the process of the production and removes a degree of abstraction.”

Cahill also is the director of this performance. He explained this allows students to ask questions directly about the intention of a particular scene or line of dialogue, and it provides for more improvisation and collaboration on



Staff photo by Sabrina Thompson

Jacob Moseley and Maia Vandervlugt rehearse for the play “Human High School,” an original play by director and high school teacher Kevin Cahill. The show runs March 12-14 at the La Grande High School Auditorium.

rewrites because he can immediately assess the actors’ ideas.

“This way of working is much closer to the
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Forest Restoration

Turning back the clock

■ Project would restore Sheep Creek forests to historic composition

By Dick Mason
The Observer

STARKEY — Clues from the past may soon dictate what the Sheep Creek area south of Starkey will look like in the future.

The U.S. Forest Service’s La Grande Ranger District is proposing the Sheep Creek Vegetation Management Project to restore the 30,000-acre Sheep Creek area, 22 air miles southwest of La Grande, to what it looked like at least 180 years ago before Oregon Trail pioneers began traveling through Northeast Oregon.

The Forest Service wants to restore the vegetation and timber makeup of the Sheep Creek area to what it was long ago when its forests were more resilient to drought, fire and insect infestations because the trees were best suited for the area.

“The stands are out of balance. We want to restore the forests’ compositions to what they were when they were the most resilient to disturbances,” said Lucas Glick, a silviculturist with the La Grande Ranger District.

Sites for restoration work include Sheep Creek’s lower mountain zone, which receives less precipitation than other areas in the zone and is more prone to fire. More than a century ago, ponderosa pine and western larch filled the zone. The species were ideal because they are drought and fire resistant.

Much of the ponderosa pine and western larch is gone today because of disturbances, which included logging activity. Douglas fir, lodgepole pine and grand fir now grow in large numbers in the lower mountain zone as a result. These trees are far less drought and fire resistant

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Marijuana ban

Dispensary owner seeks to end La Grande pot ban

■ HWY30 Cannabis owner submits ballot title for consideration

By Sabrina Thompson
The Observer

LA GRANDE — Rona Lindsey, owner of HWY30 Cannabis in La Grande, filed a ballot title for city

residents to consider repealing the local laws banning marijuana-related businesses.

Lindsey filed the ballot title Tuesday. That was the first step for the matter to reach voters’ ballots during the Nov. 3 election.

The title refers to La Grande ordinances 3227 and 3228, series 2015. No. 3227 prohibits sales of limited marijuana retail products from

medical marijuana dispensaries, and No. 3228 bans medical marijuana processing sites and dispensaries and recreational marijuana producers, processors, wholesalers and retailers. Lifting the bans will allow the sale of those products and allow these types of business within La Grande’s city limits.

HWY30 Cannabis, a medical marijuana dispensary, is operational

under the bans because its application for approval from the city came before the bans went into effect.

Residents of La Grande have until March 12 at 5 p.m. to file a petition in objection to the title. Petitions must be filed with the Union County Circuit Court and name city attorney Wyatt Baum as the respondent. Residents also can

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WEATHER

Full forecast on the back of B section



Tonight
23 LOW
Colder



Sunday
45/27
Mostly cloudy

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Call The Observer newsroom at 541-963-3161 or send an email to news@lagrandeobserver.com. More contact info on Page 4A.



TUESDAY PRESERVATION WORKSHOP

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