

'Embrace the Unknown' is Art Center East's first virtual exhibit

By Sabrina Thompson
The Observer

LA GRANDE — Art Center East opened its first virtual exhibit, "Embrace the Unknown," on June 5.

It features a collection of fluid acrylic paintings by local artist Theresa Henderson. Photos of the paintings in the exhibit and an interview with the artist are viewable online at the center's website, www.artcentereast.org.

"My fluid art deals with the four Cs: color, composition, contrast and creativity," Henderson said

in a statement about her pieces. "My work has been influenced by the colorful places I've experienced in my travels. Fluid art is my gateway to creativity, experimentation and the soul."

In the interview with Henderson posted on the gallery page, the artist addresses the inspiration for the pieces and the process of creating them.

The type of fluid acrylic painting Henderson does involves pouring paint onto a canvas and letting it flow freely. Techniques

and tools are used to shape the patterns within the paintings as desired.

"Every time I do a pour it is like embracing the unknown," Henderson said. "While you have some control, you also have to go with the paint. So, it takes lots and lots of practice, and trust, and the giving up of control in order to achieve a painting you like and maybe someone else will love."

Fifty percent of the art sales will be donated to the center's youth scholarship fund. Henderson

would like to help those who may not have access to artistic and creative outlets.

"Our children have some art in school and some of them don't have the opportunity and don't have the supplies, and I always want to nurture that," Henderson said. "I just want children to have the opportunity to experiment and grow through classes they can take at Art Center East."

The virtual exhibit will remain on display until Aug. 8.



Photo contributed by Art Center East
Local artist Theresa Henderson's piece, "Star Burst," is on display as part of Art Center East's virtual gallery exhibit, now open on the center's website.

Polio vaccine's arrival in La Grande 65 years ago met with suspicion

Local nurse Gertrude Fennimore helps convince public of vaccine safety

By Dick Mason
The Observer

LA GRANDE — A vaccine for the deadly new coronavirus, according to many infectious disease experts, should be available to the public within two years, finally ending a global pandemic. The delivery of the first coronavirus vaccine in Union County likely will be a well-publicized event, just as the historic arrival of the Salk polio vaccine was 65 years ago.

Polio vaccine was first delivered here May 1, 1955, on a West Coast Airlines plane at about 8:20 p.m. The delivery made headlines for near miraculous and dark reasons.

Many perceived the

vaccine as a silver bullet, with the potential of making one of the most feared diseases a horror of the past. Unfortunately, the vaccine arrived in La Grande right after a massive initial nationwide inoculation program had tragically gotten off to a nightmarish start. The reason — at least one pharmaceutical company produced a bad batch of vaccine.

The defective vaccine was injected into 200,000 children, causing 40,000 of them to get polio, 200 of whom suffered paralysis and 10 of whom died, according to a March 2006 article in the Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine. This total included three chil-

dren in Oregon and two in Idaho, according to an article in the May 4, 1955, Observer, then the La Grande Evening Observer.

The news of these contracting polio from the vaccine alarmed Union County parents, causing 20 who had signed up their children for the shots to withdraw their sons and daughters, according to the May 6, 1955, Observer.

The number pulling out their children may have been greater had it not been for Gertrude Fennimore, a Union County public health nurse, who emphasized in an Observer interview the vaccine La Grande had received was produced by Parke-Davis, a Detroit-based pharmaceutical company not responsible for the defective vaccine.

The Salk vaccine pro-

gram launched in the United States in the mid-1950s called for a killed strain of the polio virus to be inoculated in children. Some initial batches of the Salk vaccine contained a strain of the polio virus that was not completely dead, causing many people to get the dreaded disease.

Those receiving the Salk vaccine had to receive two shots, the second one about a week after the first. This requirement created concern among local health officials because some children were getting out of school for summer vacation and it was feared it would be difficult to get them to a clinic for the second shot.

"There would be no point in giving children the initial inoculation if we couldn't give them the second," Dr. W. J. Kubler,

a Union County part-time health officer, told The Observer in its May 7, 1955, edition.

Yet about 700 first- and second-graders in Union County were successfully vaccinated against polio. The vaccine was given to first- and second-graders because they were particularly vulnerable to polio.

The release of the polio vaccine came at a time when the incidence of polio was alarmingly high. An average of at least 15,000 people in the United States suffered paralysis as a result of polio each year in the early and mid-1950s, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website. Fortunately by the 1960s, due to the vaccine, the average number of cases fell to less than 100 a year. Today the disease is virtually nonex-

istent in the United States.

Polio claimed less than a half a dozen lives in Union County in the early 1950s, according to an article in the March 31, 1997, Observer.

The late Dr. Treve Lumsden, a longtime La Grande physician who started a medical practice here in 1951, said the lack of outbreaks might have been attributable to several factors, including limited travel by area residents. This reduced the likelihood of people picking up the virus outside the area and bringing it here, he told The Observer in 1997.

Lumsden, who died in 2004 at age 78, said the development of a vaccine surprised some in the medical community.

"Many of us thought it would be a curse we would have to live with forever," he said.

OBITUARIES

Betty E. (Newton) Morse
1928-2020 • La Grande

Betty Evangeline Morse, 92, of La Grande, died June 11 as a result of an accident in her garden. Interment will be at Valley View Cemetery in Newberg with a private family graveside service. Arrangements by Daniels-Knopp Funeral, Cremation & Life Celebration



Center in La Grande.

Betty was born March 16, 1928, in McMinnville, one of 12 children born to William Wallace and Amy Elizabeth (Doney) Newton. She graduated from Newberg High School with the class of 1946.

Betty worked as a secretary to the city attorney of Newberg. Her desk was next to a window in the city hall near where Leonard "Lenny" Morse was pumping gas at the Flying A gas station. After much smiling and many greetings he finally got the courage to ask for a date, and on April

4, 1947, Betty and Lenny were married in Stevenson, Washington. In Lenny's words: "Love is grand!"

Betty did floral design and had a custom cake business for several years with Leonard, but mostly she was a homemaker, wife, mother, grandmother and good friend. During the years she lived on a farm in Newberg, she tended sheep, raised chickens and peafowl, grew Christmas and fruit trees and hosted VBS kids in the summer. In 1992, Betty and Leonard moved to La Grande from Woodburn Senior Estates.

Betty and Leonard belonged to the Christian Church in Newberg and Valley Fellowship in La Grande. Betty also belonged to the Union County Historical Society, Grande Ronde Bird Club and a women's Bible study group.

She enjoyed gardening, growing many varieties of vegetables and flowers every summer. She also enjoyed fishing for trout and steelhead and had always

Upcoming local services

LOVELAND
FUNERAL CHAPEL AND CREMATORY

June 20 — EVA BENNETT: 2 p.m. graveside service; Island City Cemetery.

June 25 — LEROY POE: 4 p.m. celebration of life, Summerville Baptist Church.

—Calendar courtesy of Loveland Funeral Chapel, La Grande

Grande; daughter, Wendy Schmidt of La Grande; daughter and son-in-law, Becky and Willie Noll of Summerville; and five grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her parents; siblings, Robert, Daniel, William, Alonzo, Edwin, Richard, Samuel, John, Adria, Joy and Rose; son, David Morse; grandson, Jedidiah Morse; and son-in-law, Lester Schmidt.

Online condolences may be left at www.danielsknopp.com.

Carrel R. Hurst
Summerville

Carrel R. Hurst, 84, of Summerville, died June 12, 2020 at his home. Arrangements are by Loveland Funeral Chapel & Crematory.

John Driessen
Elgin

John Driessen, 76, of Elgin, died June 13 at his home. Arrangements are by Loveland Funeral Chapel & Crematory.

hoped to fish for salmon.

An accomplished quilter, Betty made a quilt for each of her grandchildren. She also made numerous baby quilts, knitted hundreds of hats for those in need and sewed dresses for needy little girls around the world.

Surviving relatives include her husband of 73 years, Leonard of La

PUBLIC SAFETY REPORT

FRIDAY

11:07 a.m. — La Grande police received a report of animal neglect on the 1000 block of Frontier Court.

11:12 a.m. — La Grande police responded to a complaint about vandalism on the 400 block of 20th Street. An officer took a report.

2:38 p.m. — A caller reported someone left two small children in a vehicle in the business parking lot at 2212 Island Ave. An officer responded and counseled the driver.

6:47 p.m. — La Grande police responded to the business parking lot again, this time for an intoxicated driver. People at the scene told officers the person in question was the passenger of the vehicle and getting a ride home. That was after liquor store customers stopped the man from driving.

9:16 p.m. — La Grande police responded to the 600 block of 12th Street for a dog bite victim, and an officer took a report.

SATURDAY

12:28 a.m. — A caller reported a loud party on the 2200 block of Fir Street, La Grande. Police responded and talked to the homeowners about the noise level.

10:18 a.m. — La Grande police responded to the 1900 block of N Avenue on a report of a domestic disturbance. Officers trespassed one person from the residence.

4:34 p.m. — La Grande police responded to the 2300 block of Island Avenue, La Grande, on a report of an assault. Police arrested William Ellen Hernandez, 52, of La Grande, on accusations of second-degree trespass, second-degree mischief, harassment, interfering with making

a report and first-degree theft.

5:28 p.m. — The Union County Sheriff's Office responded to the 500 block of North Gale Street, Union, for a dog bite victim. A deputy took a report.

11:39 p.m. — A caller reported a fight on the 200 block of Depot Street, La Grande. Police arrived and found no fighting.

SUNDAY

1:07 a.m. — La Grande police received a report of injured livestock on the 600 block of 16th Street.

12:50 p.m. — A caller reported a dog on the loose on the 2200 block of Cove Avenue, La Grande. Police warned the

dog's owner for allowing a dog at large.

3:43 p.m. — A La Grande caller asked for police to respond to an assault on the 1500 block of Adams Avenue. Officers arrived and trespassed one person from the property.

6:05 p.m. — The Union County Sheriff's Office arrested Dustin John Mathis, 28, of Elgin, on accusations of three counts of reckless endangering, one each of misdemeanor reckless driving, misdemeanor fourth-degree assault, misdemeanor and felony fleeing and hit-and-run involving a person, plus violating probation.

Sign up now for Wallowa's Fourth of July parade

WALLOWA — Signups are available for anyone wanting to participate in Wallowa's Fourth of July parade, set to take place at 11 a.m. on the nation's birthday.

A signup sheet for anyone who wants to take part in the event, which is being run by a citizen's committee, is available at Goebel's gas station and Ram Auto and True Value Hardware in Wallowa, according to Terri Barn-

hart, a member of the parade committee.

The parade won't have a theme or a grand marshal, as it was only recently given approval to proceed.

Entries of all kinds are welcome, Barnhart said, including antique cars or tractors, horse riders, entries from resources entitles, log trucks and more.

For more information, contact Barnhart at 541-263-2188.

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