



Alex Wittwer/The Observer

Kathy Rudd, left, a La Grande High School alum, and Eric Freeman, the school's assistant principal, pose for a portrait Thursday, Feb. 25, 2021. They are working on a project to restore missing photos to the school's graduating classes archives.

PHOTOS

Continued from Page 1A

Freeman would like to see all the restored frames have blue backgrounds to coincide with the school colors of blue and white. He also said he would like to see the frames have other common elements to provide uniformity and a sharper look.

"We want to protect and update them," Freeman said.

He said doing this will make it more likely the senior picture frames will not be lost years from now, even if the district replaces the building in the future. La Grande High's senior classes, he said, deserve to have their place in their school's history preserved.

"We want to honor graduating classes," Freeman said.

The tradition of creating framed senior class picture collection is believed to have been discontinued sev-

eral years ago, but Freeman said he hopes to revive it.

"We want to continue this process for every senior class," said Freeman, who is in his first school year as the school's assistant principal after coming to the Grande Ronde Valley from Roseburg where he was an educator.

Freeman said he is hopeful people in the community will come forward with materials the project can use to fill in the holes and help complete the series.

"Someone might even have negatives for the years that are missing," he said.

Rudd said she is confident many people will be eager to assist the Graduation Class Picture Project because of their allegiance to La Grande High School.

"The high school is such a big part of La Grande," she said.

For information on assisting the Graduation Class Picture Project, call Rudd at 541-910-6122.

CATTLEMEN

Continued from Page 1A

region depend on federal grazing permits with agencies like the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management. More wild and scenic rivers could prompt greater restrictions, he said.

"We are cognizant of the importance of protecting the riparian areas along these waterways, but to have the potential exclusion of access in these areas, that could raise some serious questions," Sharp said. "That would be an obvious impact to producers."

While the vast majority of streams and rivers in the act are on Forest Service or BLM land, some stretches flow through private property.

Matt McElligott, a North Powder rancher and board member of the Public Lands Council, said the map of proposed wild and scenic rivers creates a "checkerboard pattern" of protected and non-protected areas that could make it more difficult for agencies to manage.

"Some of them, you can graze them. Some of them, you can't," McElligott said. "And they're not connected."

The bill's authors have said they were careful to include plain language that explicitly preserves existing property rights.

For example, the bill states that nothing in it will repeal any existing private contract, including those for utility corridors, group facilities, roads and, importantly for ranchers, water transmission facilities.

If the bill passes, agencies will have up to six years to write a comprehensive plan for the newly designated wild and scenic corridors. Specifically, the bill requires them to assess wildfire risks and implement a plan to pro-



For EO Media Group

Todd Nash, Wallowa County rancher and commissioner, says ranchers and local leaders are continuing to gather more information about the River Democracy Act and working with the staff of U.S. Sens. Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley to answer questions.

"I can't help but think there will be some unintended consequences at some point."

— Todd Nash, rancher

tect homes, businesses and clean up watersheds post-fire.

McElligott said ranchers appreciate the acknowledgment of wild-fire risks, though the Public Lands Commission criticized the bill for not recognizing grazing as a potential management tool for reducing fuel loads.

"If we have that big of a set-aside (of land), that's more of a fire danger than fire prevention," he said.

Nash said ranchers and local leaders are continuing to gather more information about the bill and working with the senators' staff to answer questions.

"We have good-faith communication and intentions from the Wyden administration, I do believe," Nash said. "But I can't help but think there will be some unintended consequences at some point."

SYNDROME

Continued from Page 1A

16% of people across the globe, can have.

Her book "Word Gobblers," about recognizing and helping children (and adults) with Irlen Syndrome, will be published in mid-March. Local artist Joan Gilbert has illustrated it.

"It's different for everybody, and it can be very subtle," Matthias said. "For about 50% of people who have it, it's genetic. For the other 50%, it's usually brain injuries. It can also be triggered by high fevers or certain viruses."

The cause of Irlen Syndrome, Matthias noted, is the brain is not processing certain light waves — colors — and those light waves are different for different people. As the brain starts building a picture of a written page or other subject, it's not making any

WHAT IS IRLÉN SYNDROME?

- A disorder of the way the brain interprets light signals.
- You can be born with it or develop it, and it can be caused by injuries or illness.
- Written words may appear to be blurry, moving or disappear.
- Symptoms can include light sensitivity, poor reading comprehension, strain, fatigue, headaches and nausea.

Source: irlen.com

sense because some of the wavelengths are missing. Consequently, people with Irlen Syndrome have brains that are sort of hyperactive, trying to make sense of incomplete pictures.

The solutions for Matthias and others with Irlen Syndrome include placing colored filters on top of pages of text or printing text out on colored paper. But the best thing, Matthias said, is wearing a pair of glasses or contact lenses with multiple color filters that are specifically designed for the individual's needs.

Matthias now wears a pair of specially prescribed glasses with five color fil-

ters. The glasses also cut down on glare from the sides and top. She wouldn't go anywhere without them.

"The glasses are not a cure," Matthias said. "You cannot cure this. All you can do is ameliorate it. The glasses aren't really colored to the observer, and they don't change colors you are seeing. But they do make what you see more true to life because your brain is not trying to make sense of chaos."

As a certified Irlen Syndrome screener, Matthias uses 10 colored filters to determine which colored filters work. There are several hundred combinations.

Diagnosticians who can actually prescribe the color combinations for glasses have more than 100,000 options to meet the needs of each individual.

"I had a friend from Portland, who's a successful photographer, painter and writer, coming to visit and I explained that I needed someone without Irlen Syndrome to test," Matthias said. "We went through the test and I don't remember which color it was, but we were going through colors and I put a color over her page, and she burst into sobs. And I'm thinking 'What have I done to my friend?' And she finally looked at me and said, 'My entire childhood makes sense now.'"

For more information about Irlen Syndrome and the Irlen Institute, visit irlen.com.

To contact Matthias for questions about a screening or diagnosis, visit her website: CatherineMatthias.com.

VACCINES

Continued from Page 1A

with medical conditions the U.S. Centers for Disease Control defines as making them more likely to become seriously ill or die if infected with COVID-19, can sign-up. Conditions include type 2 diabetes, cancer, heart conditions, kidney disease and compromised immune systems. Pregnancy is on the list, as is obesity that results in a Body Mass Index of 30 or more.

Residents should consult with their doctor and with the full explanation of qualifying conditions on the CDC and Oregon Health Authority websites.

Also eligible on March 29 are some farm and food industry workers, homeless people, residents of low-income or congregate housing, wildland firefighters and those displaced by the 2020 wildfires.

On May 1, those 16-44 with medical conditions on the CDC list can sign up. Also "frontline" workers with jobs dealing with the public and any adult living in a multi-generational household.

Phase 2 wraps up with anyone over 45 eligible on June 1 and anyone over 16 on July 1.

No vaccine approved for children is available yet, though several are under development.

The optimistic scenario for the future clashed with the reality of widespread frustration over the

gap between eligibility and availability. Brown and Allen forecast "chaos" last month for the system of large vaccination centers and local pharmacies that will handle inoculation of seniors across the state.

The central math problem is too little vaccine for too many arms.

Allen pointed out Oregon is at or above the national average of 15% of the populace having received at least one shot. But a look at the numbers is daunting.

About 1.36 million people in Oregon are in Phase 1. Each vaccination requires two shots, or 2.72 million shots for the group.

Oregon is not close to reaching that number. Between the vaccine first becoming available at the end of December 2020 and Friday, Oregon reports it has injected 911,648 doses.

That would leave 1.8 million shots needed to cover Phase 1 with a month to go until Phase 2 starts.

Oregon has ramped up to about 20,000 shots per day and forecasts expanding the number of places and people who can inoculate those eligible as the vaccine

supply increases.

One number that's not known is how many

people are refusing to be inoculated.

Oregon Health Authority

Director Pat Allen said neither state or federal officials are tracking who is eligible but says no to the vaccine. The higher that number, the more vaccine is actually available for those that want it.

Allen said OHA still is vaccinating Phase 1 groups who have not yet been able to get to a vaccine site. Brown said that pausing this month will allow Oregon to catch up

on the backlog.

"We want to keep our commitment to our seniors," Brown said.

Allen said Phase 2 will begin May 29 regardless of how many Phase 1 people get inoculated this month.

OHA said it would issue updated guidance on the availability of vaccine and the various ways to sign-up and receive a notification when a resident's eligibility group comes up.

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