

TODAY IN HISTORY

Today is Thursday, March 18, the 77th day of 2021. There are 288 days left in the year.

TODAY'S HIGHLIGHT IN HISTORY:

On March 18, 1963, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Gideon v. Wainwright*, ruled unanimously that state courts were required to provide legal counsel to criminal defendants who could not afford to hire an attorney on their own.

ON THIS DATE:

In 1910, the first filmed adaptation of Mary Shelley's novel "Frankenstein," a silent short produced by Thomas Edison's New York movie studio, was released.

In 1925, the Tri-State Tornado struck Missouri, Illinois and Indiana, resulting in some 700 deaths.

In 1937, in America's worst school disaster, nearly 300 people, most of them children, were killed in a natural gas explosion at a school in Rusk County, Texas.

In 1940, Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini met at the Brenner Pass, where the Italian dictator agreed to join Germany's war against France and Britain.

In 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed an executive order authorizing the War Relocation Authority, which was put in charge of internment of Japanese-Americans.

In 1965, the first space-walk took place as Soviet cosmonaut Alexei Leonov went outside his Voskhod 2 capsule, secured by a tether.

In 1974, most of the Arab oil-producing nations ended their 5-month-old embargo against the United States that had been sparked by American support for Israel in the Yom Kippur War.

In 1996, rejecting an insanity defense, a jury in Dedham, Massachusetts, convicted John C. Salvi III of murdering two women in attacks at two Boston-area abortion clinics in December 1994. (Salvi later committed suicide in his prison cell.)

In 2017, Chuck Berry, rock 'n' roll's founding guitar hero and storyteller who defined the music's joy and rebellion, died at his home west of St. Louis at age 90.

Riverfest to rev up in June in Elgin

By **DICK MASON**
The Observer

ELGIN — One of Elgin's most popular annual events will rev up again this spring after a one-year hiatus.

Riverfest, an event celebrating Elgin, was canceled in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic but is set to return June 19.

"We are very excited," said Kathy Oliver, president of the Elgin Lions Club, which puts on the annual event.

The centerpiece of Riverfest will again be its car show, to be conducted on a field near the Elgin Community Center. The car show is annually one of the first to be conducted in Northeast Oregon and draws at least 70 vehicles a year.

Oliver said it will be easy to hold the event at this site and meet social distancing standards for



The Observer, File

Cars, including this classic, cruised the highway into Elgin for the 2008 RiverFest car show. The event was on hiatus in 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic, but the Elgin Lions Club is bringing it back for June 2021.

COVID-19. She explained the field is spacious enough that vehicles can be at least 6 feet apart from one another. The car show also will have signs reminding people to practice social distancing.

The car show, as in past years, likely will fea-

ture vehicles from as far away as Boise, Idaho, and Seattle, Oliver said. She said that in past years almost all participants have driven the vehicles to the show instead of hauling them on trailers.

"We have few trailer queens," she said.

Oliver and her husband, Steve Oliver, again will have their cars displayed in the show. Her car will be a 1972 Volkswagen, and his will be a 1965 Ford Thunderbird.

The car show is one of a limited number conducted on grass fields instead of asphalt lots or streets. Kathy Oliver said this makes it more popular because it allows it to be conducted in a cooler environment. Car show visitors and participants enjoy having the show in a field instead of on pavement.

"People enjoy strolling in the grass," she said, noting that pavement gets hot and is "hard on the tires and hard on people."

Old agricultural equipment again will be on display near the car show, including a steam-powered tractor. Many farmers in the late 1800s and early 1900s used

steam-powered tractors.

Members of the Elgin Fire Department return as well to Riverfest to serve the Firemen's Breakfast.

Traditionally the breakfast has been served indoors but this year it likely will be outdoors to make it easier to meet social distancing standards.

A quilt show also could again be held in Elgin High School's gym. The Lions Club will make a final decision on that later this month, Oliver said.

Even with the quilt show, Riverfest will be smaller this year to allow for social distancing standards.

"There will be fewer activities and it will not be as long," Oliver said.

She expects that Riverfest will be back to normal in 2022, if the pandemic is over by then.

"By next year it will be in full swing," Oliver said.

Sorority adds new fundraiser event, set May 1

By **DICK MASON**
The Observer

LA GRANDE — One of La Grande's leading philanthropic organizations is breaking with tradition in an effort to extend a greater hand of assistance to the Union County community.

ESA Delta Epsilon Sorority No. 2566 has traditionally conducted one major annual fundraiser, the Holiday Market, a sale of Christmas items in late fall at the Blue Mountain Conference Center. The sorority, though, is now set to add a second major fundraiser, plus move its Christmas-season event to a new location. The sorority's new fundraiser will be conducted each spring at the Union County Fairgrounds 4-H building. The initial event will be

conducted May 1.

"I'm optimistic. We are pretty excited about it," said Mary Ellen Taal, a long-serving member of the Delta Epsilon Sorority.

Taal said many vendors have expressed interest in taking part in the new fundraiser and the 4-H building will provide enough space to meet COVID-19 social distancing standards.

The sorority's Christmas season fundraiser, which had been conducted at the Blue Mountain Conference Center for about 15 years, also will take place in the 4-H building at the Union County Fairgrounds. Taal said the change in venue is because the sorority is moving its Christmas season fundraiser from late November to the first Sat-

urday in December. It would be impossible to have the Christmas season fundraiser in the Blue Mountain Conference Center on the first Saturday in December because that is when Soroptimist International of La Grande holds its annual Festival of Trees event.

Taal said moving the holiday season fundraiser to the first Saturday of December will help it raise money because more people are in the Christmas shopping spirit once December arrives. She added many people also have money for gifts then, because many have just gotten paid after the first of the month.

This means the Delta Epsilon Sorority fundraiser and a portion of the Festival of Trees event both will be

conducted on the first Saturday in December. Taal said she believes people will enjoy having the opportunity to attend both popular Christmas season events on the same day. She noted the times of both events will not overlap too much.

Taal has been a member of the sorority for 26 years. She is its third-longest serving active member behind Gay Zander, who is assisting her with fundraising changes, and Valdene Gould. Zander has been a member at least 40 years, and Gould for close to 60.

No. 2566 was founded between 50 and 60 years ago. Its Christmas season fundraiser was conducted in late November at the old Central Elementary School

at 402 K Ave., La Grande, for about three decades until the Blue Mountain Conference Center opened about 15 years ago. The sorority made its move to the conference center because of the additional space it provided.

The sorority traditionally raises about \$2,000 for the community. These funds go to organizations, programs and individuals, including the Union County Special Olympics, foster care programs, the Santa Mall and families in emergency situations. Delta Epsilon also sponsors a number of community events, including the Union County Fair Parade, Taal said.

Being able to help her community as a member of Delta Epsilon, Taal said, "is a very fulfilling endeavor."

Family not guilty of violating 'stay home' resolution

Judge agrees gathering was essential to tribal family's well-being

By **WIL PHINNEY**
For the East Oregonian

MISSION — Seventeen people cited for violating COVID-19 social gathering restrictions during a 2020 Easter day feast were found not guilty on Tuesday, March 9, by Associate Tribal Judge Dave Gallaher.

The ruling followed a 90-minute civil hearing in tribal court on the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation near Pendleton.

The tribes'

board of trustees issued the "stay home" resolution in March 2020.

Violation of the resolution carried a potential sentence of a year in jail or a maximum fine of \$5,000.

However, the 17 were cited as a civil matter rather than arrested on criminal charges, tribal prosecutor Kyle Daley told the court before anyone gave testimony.

Toby Patrick, a CTUIR member, hosted a First Foods celebration on April 26, 2020, with more than two dozen family members at his home on the reservation.

First Foods include water, salmon, deer and elk, roots and berries.

Patrick, who was represented by Robert Klahn, and his longtime partner, Julia Johnson, a Warm Springs tribal member, appeared in tribal court while the others appeared by telephone.

Gallaher's ruling hinged on the question of whether Patrick's family feast was an "essential" event.

The BOT resolution prohibited "nonessential tribal, longhouse, social and recreational gatherings of individuals outside of a home or place of residence (parties, celebrations or other similar gatherings)" regardless of size, "if a distance of at least 6 feet between individuals cannot be maintained."

According to the verdict and judgment, Patrick presented evidence the

as an investigator for the CTUIR Department of Children and Family Services, testified the Patrick residence is a "certified foster home."

A Facebook photo, which spurred the investigation and subsequent citations, showed at least one child and an adult who had a "protection order against him," Barnett said, adding he told Patrick such gatherings "can't continue if you want to keep your certification as a foster home."

However, there was no further discussion of foster children during the trial.

Chairwoman Kat Brigham, speaking on her own and not for the full tribe's Board of Trustees, said the restric-

tions in the resolution were never meant to punish people for their religious beliefs.

She said the Patrick gathering was investigated and resulted in citations because of "other concerns" apparent in the Facebook photo.

Brigham acknowledged that many families, including her own, had ceremonies at home.

"The resolution didn't stop that. It just asked people to be careful of numbers," she said. "We didn't have a lot of information at the time, other than the need for social distancing, washing your hands and wearing masks. We just wanted people to take seriously being careful, being safe and being healthy."

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— **Kat Brigham**, chairwoman of the Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation board of trustees

gathering was a "family religious observance" that was "essential to the spiritual and cultural well-being of the family."

Gallaher's ruling said the tribes, represented by Daley, presented no evidence a family religious observance is a "nonessential gathering."

"In the absence of evidence on a material element of the violation, the Court is left to speculate as to what is meant by 'essential,' and 'essential' to whom? Such guesswork and speculation may not be the basis of a finding of guilt," Gallaher wrote in his ruling.

Under questioning from Daley, Tony Barnett, who at the time of the feast was a member of the Umatilla Tribal Police working

Hansell appointed to serve on State Fair Council

SALEM — Oregon Sen. Bill Hansell has an additional job.

Senate President Peter Courtney recently appointed the Republican from Athena to serve on the Oregon State Fair Council, according to a press release.

"I am excited and honored to have been appointed to the State Fair Council, formerly called the State Fair Board," Hansell said. "I look forward to ensuring state and county fairs will be enjoyed by countless more Oregonians in the future."

The Oregon State Fair Council is a state of Oregon Public Corporation. The governor appoints 11 of its members, and the Senate president and House speaker appoint one member each.

"I want to thank Senate President Peter Courtney for the appointment. I look forward to serving on the council," Hansell said. "The Oregon State Fair has been held since the early days of statehood, and along with county fairs, are critical sources of economic vitality and cultural celebration."

The Union County Fair welcomed the appointment.

"Bill Hansell has done great things for this community," said Jamie Jo Haddock, president of the Union County Fair Board. "I'm glad to have him on and I will be glad to work with him."

EOU No. 3 on list of Oregon colleges COVID-19 cases

SALEM — A New York Times review of COVID-19 cases published March 2 shows 3,189 cases of the disease linked to Oregon colleges since Feb-

NEWS BRIEFS



Oregon State Fair/Contributed Photo, File

Sen. Bill Hansell, R-Athena, competes in the Oregon Legislative Goat Milking Showdown at the 150th Oregon State Fair on Sept. 4, 2015. He is a two-time winner of the contest and in 2021 is serving on the State Fair Council.

ruary 2020. The University of Oregon had the highest reported positive test count at 1,479. Oregon State is second at 787 cases and Eastern Oregon University was third at 111 cases.

The Times put an asterisk next to Oregon Health & Science University in Portland, which reported 335 cases early in the pandemic. The campus includes a medical center and other facilities that serve the community.

The review compiled 535,000 cases at more than 1,900 colleges and universities.

New program offers more preschool options

PENDLETON — The Oregon Department of Education's Early Learning Division has a new grant to help children ages 3 and 4 to attend quality preschool programs before entering kindergarten.

Preschool Promise is a model for a publicly funded, high-quality preschool system, according to a press release from the InterMountain Education Service District. It leverages local and culturally relevant early child care and education programs and makes them available to children living

at 200% of the poverty level (for example, a family of four making \$53,000 or less per year).

According to Michelle Gomez, coordinated enrollment specialist at the Blue Mountain Early Learning Hub, the purpose of Preschool Promise programs is to create an inclusive, welcoming environment for all children and families.

There are 11 Preschool Promise locations in the Blue Mountain Early Learning Hub region of Morrow, Umatilla and Union counties. Gomez said some of these programs are home-based and some are more traditional preschool classrooms.

To qualify for Preschool Promise programs, children must be 3 to 4 years old on or before Sept. 1 of the program year and they must live in Oregon. The annual or previous 12 months income of the child's family must be at or below 200% of the federal poverty line. Children in foster care are automatically eligible.

For more information and to sign up for Preschool Promise, visit www.BlueMountainKids.org or email Contact@BlueMountainKids.org.

— *EO Media Group*