



Alex Wittwer/The Observer

Bob Jensen applies glaze to ceramics in his workshop at The Potter's House in La Grande on Thursday, April 1, 2021. Jensen, along with other potters in the region, are donating handmade bowls to Shelter From the Storm's annual Soup Supper fundraiser.

SUPPER

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To participate in this year's fundraiser, people must purchase a ticket online, at the Shelter From the Storm office or from one of its board members.

Then, starting April 17, donors will be able to come to Shelter From the Storm to pick up a ceramic bowl they can keep. They also will receive a voucher for soup from one of several Union County restaurants participating in the fundraiser.

Participants can pick up soup bowls and purchase soup voucher tickets April 17-30 at Shelter From the Storm, 10901 Island Ave., Island City, during office hours: Monday-Friday,

8 a.m. to noon and 1-5 p.m.

While the method of getting the soup has changed, one element of the event remains the same: Local potters have made and donated all the Soup Supper bowls.

"They have been very generous," Landa said.

Bob Jensen, co-owner of The Potter's House with his wife, Judy, is among the potters who provided bowls. Jensen made 12 bowls for this year's Soup Supper. He has been making bowls annually for the fundraiser for at least two decades.

"It is for a great cause," said Jensen, a retired La Grande High School art teacher. Jensen had his LHS students make bowls for the Soup Supper years ago. He said it helped get them interested in a valu-

able community service organization.

Jensen is one of many local potters who made bowls for the Soup Supper in 2020 when Shelter From the Storm conducted it in traditional fashion just before the COVID-19 pandemic hit, Landa said. The organization's fundraising efforts were hurt, though, in 2020 because it was not able to hold its 3 Rivers Race Against Domestic Violence in its regular manner due to COVID-19. The race went on virtually instead but was not nearly as successful as in the past.

Despite the 3 Rivers Race shortfall, Shelter From the Storm made it through 2020 intact. Landa credited this in large part to grants it received from the Women's Foundation of Oregon and the All State Foundation.

REACT

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teenagers do better without having to get up so early.

Owen Morton, also a LHS senior, said he is excited about being able to come to school five days a week, but said he will miss the off-campus days because they provided him more time to complete assignments.

Pat Des Jardin, a La Grande High science teacher, said the switch to all in-person learning is another step in the right direction.

"We are getting the educational process back to normal, which is a good thing," Des Jardin said.

Sidronio Rangel, a high school Spanish teacher, also is excited that his students return to class five days a week. He said when teaching students a subject, such as a new language, it is better when a teacher can see students daily.

La Grande Middle School social studies teacher Anne Marie Fritz also is looking forward to having her students in class every day.

"I am so excited. I cannot wait," Fritz said. "I think this will be the smoothest transition that we have had. I hope the whole community can relax. We are now closer to the finish line."

Fritz said she believes the new schedule will help parents who have had



Dick Mason/The Observer, File

La Grande High School students leave school Thursday, Jan. 28, 2021, after the first day back to in-person learning since March 2020 because of the pandemic. Starting Monday, April 12, students at the high school and middle school return to in-person learning every weekday.

to spend much of their time assisting their children with schoolwork at home under the current schedule.

"I can't imagine what it must be like to have a full-time job and have to homeschool your kids," Fritz said.

Chris Leavitt, a La Grande Middle School counselor, echoed this sentiment.

"This is the next step back to normalcy," Leavitt said, a former band teacher at the high school and middle school.

Teachers who will benefit from the change, Leavitt said, include choir and band teachers because they will now get to have all of their stu-

dents practicing together.

Klel Carson, a La Grande Middle School social studies teacher, said having a full class of students every day instead of just half will allow him to do more learning activities involving small teams of students.

Carson said he marvels at how well his students are continuing to adjust to changes at school because of the COVID-19 pandemic. He said the changes are teaching students how to be adaptable at a young age, something that will serve them well later in life.

"I told my students that in terms of adaptability," Carson said, "they will be the best ever."

AWARD

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nomination in the short documentary category.

This is Fitzgerald's second Academy Award nomination. His 2018 documentary "Lifeboat," about North African migrants trying to make it across the Mediterranean Sea, also made the academy's list.

Fitzgerald said he believes he owes his success to the support he received at Eastern, where he earned a degree in theater.

"I have a deep sense of gratitude (for Eastern)," said Fitzgerald, who now lives in Happy Valley in Clackamas County.

Fitzgerald said if he had attended a larger school he might not have done as well because he would have been in larger classes with less access to his professors. He credited people such as former EOU theater professor Mark Kuntz and Mark Shadle, a former writing and English professor, with providing guidance at a critical time of his life.

"They took me under their wing when I was a young man trying to find my way," said Fitzgerald, who graduated with a minor in creative writing.

The documentary filmmaker said he fears he might have lost his way had he attended a larger university, especially after growing up in Monument, a town of less than 200 people in Grant County. His high school graduating class had seven members.

Fitzgerald said he received an excellent education in Monument, but its small size did not prepare him for a large university experience, a major reason he enrolled at Eastern. Fitzgerald said his interest in theater was piqued in Monument when he appeared in a high school production of the "Wizard of Oz."

"It sparked my interest, it primed me for theater," he said.

Fitzgerald later appeared in many play productions at Eastern.

"I loved theater," he said.

Fitzgerald said he didn't switch his focus to film until graduate school at the University of Oregon. He originally applied to the theater director master's program at Oregon because an EOU professor encouraged him. At Oregon, however, chance led him to take a film class to fulfill a credit requirement.

"I was literally just flipping through the graduate catalog and I stum-

bled upon this television directing class at the graduate level," he said.

Once he took that class, Fitzgerald said, he knew that filmmaking was what he wanted to do.

"Hunger Ward," much of which takes place in two therapeutic feeding centers in Yemen for children suffering from malnutrition, is the third in a humanitarian trilogy that Fitzgerald is directing. The first was "50 Feet from Syria" (2015), which focuses on doctors working on the Syrian border, and then came "Lifeboat."

Fitzgerald said "Hunger Ward" is a film he was compelled to make because of the magnitude of the crisis in Yemen, where many children are starving.

"I did not want to make this film, but I believed I needed to," he said.

Fitzgerald, who directed and produced the documentary, said he was elated when "Hunger Ward" was nominated for an Academy Award because this will draw greater attention to what is happening in Yemen.

"It will place it on an elevated stage," Fitzgerald said.

This year's Academy Awards ceremony will be April 25 in Los Angeles and broadcast by ABC.

Still chance to win \$20 gift certificate

There is still time to submit answers in our April Fools' Day contest and win a \$20 gift certificate to the local restaurant of your choice.

We ran an April Fool's Day gag in The Observer on Thursday, April 1, containing numerous pop culture references. Find that content — in our

print edition or online at www.lagrandeobserver.com — and send us an email or a message on Facebook with the name of the article and a list of the references.

The person who lists the most correct responses wins a \$20 certificate to a local restaurant of their choice. In

the event more than one person lists all the references correctly, whoever submitted the complete list first is the winner. Entries are due by Thursday, April 8, at noon.

Here is a hint for one reference: John Carpenter's 1982 horror film, "The Thing."



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