

TODAY IN HISTORY

Today is Tuesday, May 4, the 124th day of 2021. There are 241 days left in the year.

TODAY'S HIGHLIGHT IN HISTORY:

On May 4, 1961, the first group of "Freedom Riders" left Washington, D.C. to challenge racial segregation on interstate buses and in bus terminals.

ON THIS DATE:

In 1626, Dutch explorer Peter Minuit landed on present-day Manhattan Island.

In 1776, Rhode Island declared its freedom from England, two months before the Declaration of Independence was adopted.

In 1932, mobster Al Capone, convicted of income-tax evasion, entered the federal penitentiary in Atlanta.

In 1942, the Battle of the Coral Sea, the first naval clash fought entirely with carrier aircraft, began in the Pacific during World War II. (The outcome was considered a tactical victory for Japan, but ultimately a strategic one for the Allies.)

In 1945, during World War II, German forces in the Netherlands, Denmark and northwest Germany agreed to surrender.

In 1959, the first Grammy Awards ceremony was held at the Beverly Hilton Hotel. Domenico Modugno won Record of the Year and Song of the Year for "Nel Blu Dipinto Di Blu (Volare)"; Henry Mancini won Album of the Year for "The Music from Peter Gunn."

In 1968, the Oroville Dam in Northern California was dedicated by Gov. Ronald Reagan; the 770-foot-tall earth-filled structure, a pet project of Reagan's predecessor, Pat Brown, remains the tallest dam in the United States, but was also the scene of a near disaster in February 2017 when two spillways collapsed, threatening for a time to flood parts of three counties in the Sierra Nevada foothills.

In 1970, Ohio National Guardsmen opened fire during an anti-war protest at Kent State University, killing four students and wounding nine others.

In 1998, Unabomber Theodore Kaczynski was given four life sentences plus 30 years by a federal judge in Sacramento, California, under a plea agreement that spared him the death penalty.

In 2010, a Pakistani-born U.S. citizen was charged with terrorism and attempting to use a weapon of mass destruction in the botched Times Square bombing. (Faisal Shahzad later pleaded guilty to plotting to set off the propane-and-gasoline bomb in an SUV and was sentenced to life in prison.)

Ten years ago: President Barack Obama said he had decided not to release death photos of Osama bin Laden because their graphic nature could incite violence and create national security risks. Officials told The Associated Press that the Navy SEALs who'd stormed bin Laden's compound in Pakistan shot and killed him after they saw him appear to lunge for a weapon.

Five years ago: The last man standing in Donald Trump's path to the Republican presidential nomination, Ohio Gov. John Kasich, ended his campaign.

Digital artists duo unleash 'Mimesis'

Capstone work from EOU seniors on display at Nightingale Gallery until May 12

By ALEX WITTWER

The Observer

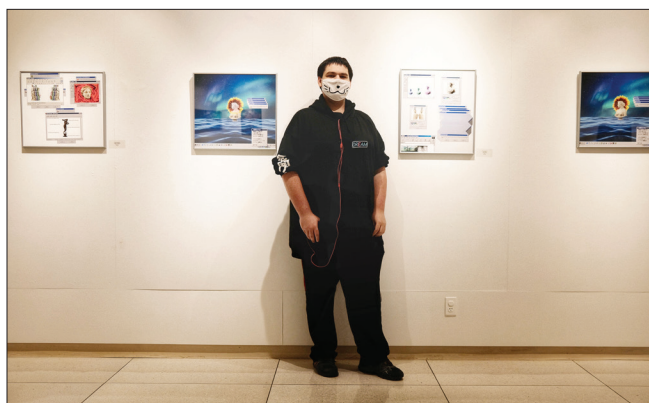
LA GRANDE — Two digital artists, Alexis Maki and Spencer Marotto, recently unveiled "Mimesis," their capstone projects at the Nightingale Gallery in Loso Hall at Eastern Oregon University. The exhibit will run until May 12 with limited showing to the public.

Side by side, the art on display on the walls stand in opposition to each other in style but not content.

Marotto's work, which resembles early home personal computers, is more literary in its critiques while Maki's fantastical landscapes marry together terror and wonder.

"A lot of my work specifically deals with response to how we've currently been living," Marotto said, "especially with the pandemic."

Marotto's collages blend



Alex Wittwer/The Observer

Artist Spencer Marotto poses for a portrait Tuesday, April 27, 2021, in front of his digital art at the Nightingale Gallery in Loso Hall at Eastern Oregon University, La Grande. The showing, called "Mimesis," is the capstone project for the senior, and runs until May 12.

nostalgia with antiquity, the digitally absurd and utilitarianism with fantastical vaporwave aesthetics — canvases of Windows 98 desktops splattered with messages and Greek statues, computer programs and familiar software glitches.

"There's a lot of seriousness in my work, but there's a comedic part too," said Marotto, pointing out a cascading popup window emblazoned with a forlorn message.

The statues aren't random. Marotto spent a considerable amount of time researching Greek his-

tory to build cohesive narratives within the pieces.

"If you asked me about (Greek) mythology, I would have told you I'd have to look at the Wikipedia page," he said.

Images for the collages are from online sources, with many images coming from the Smithsonian's online gallery.

Maki, who started her art career as a painter, deals more with concrete elements of pollution and beauty — two elements she said can exist together. Her favorite piece, "Urban Mountain," is a city-



Alex Wittwer/The Observer

Artist Alexis Maki poses for a portrait Tuesday, April 27, 2021, in front of her digital art at the Nightingale Gallery in Loso Hall at Eastern Oregon University, La Grande. The showing, called "Mimesis," is the capstone project for the senior and runs until May 12.

scape with brilliant night lights above a reflection of a mountain, a motif that speaks to how urbanization comes at a cost to nature. But the artist noted both can be beautiful.

Maki's pieces took upward of 50 hours to make, she said, owing to her relatively new experience with the digital art workflow. Before starting this project, she was not well versed with Photoshop.

"I struggled at first, but I got it over time," Maki said. "I wouldn't say I'm an expert at Photoshop, but over time, experimenting,

I was able to find my way around it."

Maki credited her peers and instructors for helping her with the program's steep learning curve.

The end results of her efforts are whimsical landscapes that express a painter's eye and originality — from scenes of lone wanderers walking through a desert thunderstorm to smokestacks atop an iceberg adrift at sea.

For more about the Nightingale Gallery and "Mimesis," visit www.eou.edu/art/nightingale-gallery/exhibitions.

La Grande looks to next sidewalk improvement program

The Observer

LA GRANDE — The La Grande City Council will consider establishing another city-wide local improvement district for sidewalk repairs when it meets Wednesday, May 5.

A local improvement district, or LID, allows property owners a way to improve their property and maintain sidewalks within the right-of-way. La Grande's last city-wide sidewalk improvement district ended Dec. 31, 2020.

According to the memo to the council from Public Works Director Kyle Carpenter, the city continues to receive calls from property owners about how they can improve their sidewalks. Implementing "City Wide Voluntary Sidewalk Local Improvement District No. 21-066" allows a method of financing this work and offers property owners a way to improve

their property and maintain sidewalks.

City staff reviewed nine areas within the sidewalk program, which would concentrate on two areas in the southern portion of town with E Avenue as the northern border and extending from Walnut Street to the railroad tracks.

"We also will continue to work with those property owners who would like to voluntarily make sidewalk improvements or necessary improvements received on a complaint basis," the memo stated.

The meeting begins Wednesday at 6 p.m. To view the meeting, go to the city's website, www.cityoflagrande.org, and click on "Watch a Council Meeting," or view the meeting on Facebook at www.facebook.com/EOAliveTV or on Charter Communications channel 180.

The public may submit

written comments or questions for the meeting by 5 p.m. Tuesday, May 4. Email public comments to City Manager Robert Strope at rstrope@cityoflagrande.org.

The council during the meeting also will hold a public hearing to accept the assessment of the 2019 sidewalk repair program, which had a total cost of \$14,000, according to a memo to the council, and involved city staff monitoring approximately 1,200 square feet of sidewalk repairs during 2019 and 2020, with many property owners hiring contractors or completing repairs themselves.

The council in other business will consider appointing Rodney Sands to the Parking, Traffic Safety and Street Maintenance Advisory Commission for the remainder of a three-year term, expiring Dec. 31, 2023.

Union County has links to NFL draft

By DICK MASON

The Observer

UNION COUNTY — Teams in the National Football League drafted 259 players from Thursday through Saturday, April 29 to May 1. The total included five from the University of Oregon and two from Oregon State University and none from Eastern Oregon University.

But 64 years ago, Eastern tied Oregon State University for the highest number of players the league drafted from the state.

Pro football teams drafted two players from Eastern and two from OSU, according to the website pro-footballreference.com. The players from Eastern were Jack Harmon, an end, whom the Baltimore Colts drafted in the eighth round, and Bill West, a back, whom the Detroit Lions took in the 13th round. Harmon was the 90th player taken, and West was the 155th player drafted.

Harmon and West were members of the 1956 Eastern team that won the old Oregon Collegiate Conference title. While the pros drafted the pair, they never played in the NFL.

Union County's connection to the NFL draft does not end there, though.

The Washington Football Team in 1981 drafted Tom Flick, who lived in the Cove area while growing up, in the fourth round. Flick, who was a star quarterback at the University of Washington in the late 1970s and early 1980s, played in the NFL for seven seasons.

Flick now is a motivational speaker who has made several appearances in Union County, including one in the 1990s in Cove in which he spoke of living there as a child. Flick, who later went to high school Bellevue, Washington, said he searched for the house his family lived in Cove but couldn't find it.

Baker Bulldog football stadium needs \$4 million for overhaul

By COREY KIRK

Baker City Herald

BAKER CITY — For the first time since it opened back in 1950, the Baker Bulldog Memorial Stadium could be in line for a major renovation project.

But the Baker School District athletic department likely will need to raise more than \$4 million through grants and private donations to make the proposed improvements at the football stadium at Ninth and E streets just west of Baker High School.

"Obviously we are in the very, very early stages," said Buell Gonzales Jr., the school district's athletic director. The three-year project, which includes rebuilding and replanting the grass field, replacing the roof on the grandstand, installing a new press box and rebuilding the concrete walkways, stairs and ramps, would cost an estimated \$4.3 million.

Gonzales, who made a presentation to the school board about the proposal on April 15, acknowledged the financial challenges.

"The district obviously doesn't have that kind of money sitting around, so that would be something that the athletic department and the district would fundraise for," he said. "The money is going to be the hardest piece to bring to fruition, so we are just going to have to do a lot of work to get that in place."

Mark Witty, school district superintendent, echoed



Corey Kirk/Baker City Herald

Cracks have formed in the concrete stairs and in the grandstand at Baker Bulldog Memorial Stadium, Baker City. A three-year-long renovation project would replace the concrete and make other improvements.

Gonzales' thoughts.

"We want to be a partner," Witty said. "We recognize there's a responsibility to upgrade that stadium. But as far as funding we're going to need some serious help."

Witty said the district's top priority within its budget is improving its schools. That's the reason the district is asking voters in the May 18 election to approve a \$4 million property tax bond measure that would be added to a \$4 million state grant, and \$4 million in district capital project dollars — to replace heating, cooling and ventilation systems at all schools, replace the roof at South Baker Intermediate, build a cafeteria/kitchen at Baker Middle School and improve security at all schools.

The stadium renovations, by contrast, will depend on fundraising, not on district dollars, Witty said.

Stadium project history

The project started about three years ago when a group of district officials and others assessed the stadium and came up with a list of suggested improvements.

Then, a year ago, Gonzales joined that group, which reviewed the list of renovations and crafted a formal proposal.

A major need in the 71-year-old stadium is improving access for people with disabilities.

"That's probably one of the high priorities, the ADA accessibility," Gonzales said.

After seven decades of wear and tear from weather, the stadium also has cracks in its concrete, and its wood siding needs to be replaced.

"The actual physical condition of the facility itself needs to be addressed," Gonzales said.

Due to the extent of the work, the architects divided

the project into three phases over three years, potentially starting in the summer of 2022 if money is available.

Although he concedes the challenge fundraising entails, Gonzales is confident he can show donors the reasons for the upgrades.

"You have this gushing wound, you just don't want to keep putting a Band-Aid over it, at some point you are going to (need) a long-term fix," Gonzales said.

In 2019 the school district replaced the railing at the bottom of the westside grandstand and removed the grassy embankment behind the home team bench area.

Workers also installed a new sound system. Ash Grove Cement contributed \$15,000 and the Baker Quarterback Club gave \$5,000. The school district paid the remaining \$20,000 for the sound system.

Gonzales emphasized the renovations will not alter the stadium's unique character and appeal, with the field in a bowl that sits below the street level.

"It still maintains its iconic bowl-shaped feature, a gorgeous grass field, a little bit wider, safer for our student-athletes, multi-purpose so it will get used more often," he said. "The look of it will have a new appeal to it, new bleachers, new paint, the bathrooms will be upgraded, wider entrances, better signage. It will give that facility a much needed facelift but it will still be Baker Bulldog Memorial Stadium."

April warmer than normal in La Grande

The Observer

PENDLETON — La Grande's temperatures averaged warmer than normal during the month of April, according to the National Weather Service in Pendleton.

Preliminary data indicated the average temperature was 49.7 degrees, 3 degrees above normal, reported the monthly climate summary from the Weather Service. High temperatures averaged 66.4 degrees, which was 8.1 degrees above normal. The highest was 84 degrees on April 30.

Low temperatures averaged 33.1 degrees, 2 degrees below normal. The lowest was 22 degrees on April 9. The month had 12 days with the low temperature below 32 degrees.

Precipitation totaled 0.7 inches during April, which was 0.88 inches below normal. Measurable precipitation

— at least a hundredth of an inch — occurred on three days with the heaviest, 0.5 inches, on April 26.

Precipitation this year has reached 5.38 inches, which is 0.43 inches below normal, the NWS reported. Since October, the water year precipitation at La Grande has been 9.96 inches, 0.83 inches below normal. The 30-year normal precipitation is 1.99 inches.

The outlook for May from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Climate Prediction Center calls for near normal temperatures and near normal precipitation. Normal highs for La Grande rise from 63 degrees at the start of May to 70 degrees at the end of May. Normal lows rise from 38 degrees to 46 degrees.

For more weather and climate information, visit weather.gov/pendleton.