

## TODAY IN HISTORY

Today is Thursday, May 6, the 126th day of 2021. There are 239 days left in the year.

### TODAY'S HIGHLIGHT IN HISTORY:

On May 6, 1954, medical student Roger Bannister broke the four-minute mile during a track meet in Oxford, England, in 3:59.4.

### ON THIS DATE:

In 1527, unpaid troops loyal to Holy Roman Emperor Charles V attacked Rome, forcing Pope Clement VII to flee to safety; some scholars mark the ensuing sack of the city as the end of the Renaissance in Italy.

In 1882, President Chester Alan Arthur signed the Chinese Exclusion Act, which barred Chinese immigrants from the U.S. for 10 years (Arthur had opposed an earlier version with a 20-year ban).

In 1910, Britain's Edwardian era ended with the death of King Edward VII; he was succeeded by George V.

In 1915, Babe Ruth hit his first major-league home run as a player for the Boston Red Sox.

In 1937, the hydrogen-filled German airship Hindenburg caught fire and crashed while attempting to dock at Lakehurst, New Jersey; 35 of the 97 people on board were killed along with a crewman on the ground.

In 1941, comedian Bob Hope did his first USO show before an audience of servicemen as he broadcast his radio program from California.

In 1942, during World War II, some 15,000 American and Filipino troops on Corregidor island surrendered to Japanese forces.

In 1957, Eugene O'Neill's play "Long Day's Journey into Night" won the Pulitzer Prize for drama; John F. Kennedy's "Profiles in Courage" won the Pulitzer for biography or autobiography.

In 2004, President George W. Bush apologized for the abuse of Iraqi prisoners by American soldiers, calling it "a stain on our country's honor."

In 2013, kidnap-rap victims Amanda Berry, Gina DeJesus and Michelle Knight, who went missing separately about a decade earlier while in their teens or early 20s, were rescued from a house in Cleveland. (Their captor, Ariel Castro, hanged himself in prison in September 2013 at the beginning of a life sentence plus 1,000 years.)

In 2015, the NFL released a 243-report on "Deflategate" that stopped short of calling Patriots quarterback Tom Brady a cheater, but did call some of his claims "implausible" and left little doubt that he'd had a role in having footballs deflated before New England's AFC title game against Indianapolis and probably in previous games.

# Home destroyed, but no one hurt in Elgin fire

By **DICK MASON**  
The Observer

ELGIN — Nobody was injured in a house fire at the corner of 11th and Birch streets in south Elgin late on Tuesday, May 4.

The fire, reported at 11:23 p.m., destroyed a one-story single-family home, said Kevin Silvernail, chief of the Elgin Rural Fire Department. The married couple who live in the home were there when the fire started.

The Elgin Rural, Imbler Rural and La Grande



Elgin Rural Fire Protection District/Screenshot

The Elgin Rural Fire Protection District and other fire departments in Union County respond late Tuesday, May 4, 2021, to a house fire at 196 S. 11th Ave., Elgin.

Rural fire departments responded, sending a total of 16 firefighters to the blaze. The Elgin and Imbler rural fire departments sent two engines and La Grande Rural sent one engine plus a command vehicle.

The Union County Sheriff's Office also responded and secured the scene.

No pets are believed to have been hurt in the fire, Silvernail said.

La Grande Rural Fire Chief Craig Kretschmer said the fire was difficult for firefighters to extin-

guish because it was in the home's attic.

"It was hard to get to," Kretschmer said.

Silvernail said the Oregon State Fire Marshal Office and the Oregon State Police are attempting to determine the cause of the blaze.

Kretschmer said the presence of the OSP does not mean this could be arson. He explained state police investigate many fires in which arson is not suspected.

Firefighters were at the site mopping up until 7:30 a.m. Wednesday.

# Wallowa County honored for early school success

By **BILL BRADSHAW**  
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — Wallowa County's Building Healthy Families received national recognition by the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading as a "2021 Bright Spot" for its responses to the coronavirus crisis last year, according to a press release.

The campaign is highlighting communities that developed exemplary or innovative responses to the coronavirus crisis. The campaign is recognizing communities for crafting solutions that seem especially effective, replication-worthy and/or deserving of being sustained during the post-coronavirus period.

"This has been a very challenging time to serve families and children in Wallowa County," said Maria Weer, BHF executive director. "Many of our usual activities have had to be reformatted because of COVID-19. We're thankful that our community partners have partnered with us to make our 'to-go' activities so successful."

BHF has been active by partnering with local libraries to provide "Story Time To-Go" bags at



Wallowa County Chieftain, File

Enterprise Public Library librarian Denine Rautenstrauch says goodbye to library patron Kim McGriff, exiting with a bag of books in hand on Monday, Sept. 21, 2020. Building Healthy Families was recently recognized for its "To-Go" activities at libraries in Enterprise and Wallowa during the coronavirus pandemic.

the Enterprise and Wallowa libraries. New bags are provided each week — and are available for pickup in the lobbies of the libraries — where pre-ordered library books also are available. Each bag

has a new book for kids to keep, and an early literacy activity to go with it.

"Story Time To-Go is still happening in the county as libraries are opening back up," said Autumn Wilburn, special

projects coordinator for BHF.

The Washington, D.C.-based campaign recognized similar programs across the country, Wilburn said.

She said that although

the recognition comes with no tangible award, it has its value.

"It earns us 'bragging rights' and will help us with grants we apply for," Wilburn said.

The campaign is a collaborative effort by funders, nonprofit partners, business leaders, government agencies, states and communities to ensure that more children in low-income families succeed in school and graduate prepared for college, a career and active citizenship.

The campaign focuses on promoting early school success as an important building block of more-hopeful futures for children in economically challenged families and communities, the press release stated.

While Building Healthy Families is known for its alternative high school, most of its work is with younger children, Wilburn said, including early literacy, Head Start, kindergarten readiness and K-3 family STEM (science, technology, engineering and math).

"The majority of our work is focused on the younger set," she said.

# Crystal Apple Awards honor Union County educators

Union County school employees receive 'Excellence' and 'Legacy' awards

By **DICK MASON**  
The Observer

LA GRANDE — Many of the brightest lights in Union County education were saluted Monday, May 3, at La Grande Middle School at a Crystal Apple Awards ceremony.

The InterMountain Education Service District conducted the ceremony honoring 14 Union County public school employees with "Excellence in Education."

It was the ninth annual Crystal Apple Awards for Union County. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the ceremony could not have an audience in attendance.

The 14 Union County school district Crystal Apple Awards presented were among 44 being given out this year. The others will be presented to school district employees from Umatilla and Morrow counties later this month in Pendleton and Echo.

Each year, the IMESD partners with its school districts to hold the Crystal Apple Awards to recognize outstanding administrators, teachers, educational assistants and office and building staff for their dedication and commitment to students and for their willingness to go above and beyond their regular duties. Administrators, coworkers, parents, members and community students submit nominations during a two-month period, and school district administrators select winners from among the nominations.

The following are the Union County winners.

### Cove School District

**Kim McBride:** McBride has worked for the school

district for 12 years, the last three as the high school's attendance secretary. McBride is the first face people see when they enter the school, and her positive attitude uplifts students, parents and staff, said Michele Madril, the IMESD's communications director, who before each presentation read aloud a synthesis of what nominators wrote about the award winner.

Madril said despite the work McBride had to do while pursuing truancy cases and sometimes having to be the bearer of bad news, she is one of the most beloved employees in the Cove School District.

**Russel Olmsted:** Olmsted, a high school shop teacher, has taught in the Cove School District for 20 years.

"He is an educator who goes above and beyond to connect with students and help them with their academic journeys," Madril said. "Russel's enthusiasm for teaching is amazing and makes both students and their parents thankful he is their teacher."

### Elgin School District

**Denise Ludwig:** Ludwig has been the district's deputy clerk for nearly 30 years.

Ludwig has played an important role in helping keep the Elgin School District financially stable and putting it in a position to take advantage of many financial opportunities, Madril said.

Madril said one nominator praised Ludwig for being able to provide a wealth of information to people while wearing many hats.

### Imbler School District

**Barry Bowers:** Bowers is a high school math teacher who has worked in the school district for 13 years.

"He is always available to help students who need extra help in math or any other subject, and even former students who are in college sometimes ask for his help," Madril said.

Bowers has coached multiple sports for boys and girls at the middle and high school levels and is also the Imbler School District's testing coordinator.

**Wendy Clerget:** Clerget has taught 23 years in the school district. She started as a kindergarten teacher and now teaches third grade. Clerget is credited with helping develop a strong solar system curriculum and effectively teaching students the lesson of the book "Stone Soup," Madril said. Clerget also was recognized for her work in organizing eighth-grade field trips to Camp Hancock in Wheeler County to search for fossils.

### La Grande School District

**Kevin Cahill:** Cahill has taught in the district for 43 years. The language arts teacher at La Grande High School was praised for the connections he makes with students.

"In class or out of class, all of his students know they are respected and there is a genuine concern for them as a person and their developing skills with the English language," Madril said, quoting a nominator.

**Linda Sweet:** Sweet is a paraeducator at Greenway Elementary School and has worked in the district for 24 years. She was credited for always stepping up to help when needed.

"Linda is a leader who leads by example by being

patient, kind, caring, knowledgeable and yet firm and steady," Madril said.

**Leslie Graham:** Graham is a fourth-grade teacher at Central Elementary School who has worked 25 years in the school district.

"She has mastered building a positive classroom community where students value citizenship and take risks to improve learning," Madril said.

Graham is credited with being an outstanding math and science teacher who has increased science, technology and math opportunities for all students in the school district.

**Dena Tams:** Tams has worked in the school district for 20 years as a secretary and now works at Island City Elementary School. Madril said Tams helps all school staff serve and nurture students.

"Dena is the backbone and foundation that makes Island City such a wonderful place to work," Madril said, quoting a nominator.

### North Powder School District

**Sandy Colton:** Colton has taught 32 years for the North Powder School District, instructing a wide range of classes at the high school and middle school levels.

"Her love of school spirit and setting the bar high are always evident," Madril said.

She noted Colton has taken steps such as getting an upper math endorsement to fulfill a district need and is dedicated to providing opportunities for seniors. Madril said nominators wrote that Colton's passion for teaching never wavers.

**Geneva Olson:** Olson is a third-grade grade teacher who has worked six years

in the North Powder School District.

"Her classroom is described as a positive, upbeat and 'buzzing with engagement,'" Madril said.

Whether mentoring student teachers, coaching or volunteering, Olson is regarded as an excellent leader, noted Madril, who added that a former third-grade student said Olson's unique lessons "helped me learn to think, but I didn't know I was actually working that hard."

### Union School District

**Julie Baxter:** Baxter has worked for the school district for 10 years and is the high school's secretary. Madril said Baxter has a broad skill set that makes her an expert troubleshooter and helps navigate the student information system and improve parent communication.

Her efforts, Madril said, have contributed to increased enrollment, better morale and high student participation.

"Julie has been a vital part of the Union School District's goal to maintain a high level of excellence and ensure a positive environment for all," Madril said, quoting a nominator.

**Shyanne Winters:** Winters has been the Union School District's music teacher for three years. Students, parents and staff feel her dedication and can-do attitude, Madril said. She also has a willingness to go the extra mile for students.

"Most people think she is a magician because of the way she makes children want to learn," Madril said, quoting a nominator.

### Intermountain Education Service District

**Deb Jones:** Jones is a speech language pathologist in Union County who

has worked for the IMESD for 13 years. Madril said Jones goes above and beyond to ensure students receive needed services. She added Jones' knowledge and expertise make a her a strong mentor to many incoming colleagues.

"She is very kind, thoughtful, generous and a rock-star SLP who will help out others any way she can," Madril said, quoting a nominator.

### Legacy Awards

**Chris Panike, La Grande School District:** Panike has been the La Grande School District's business director for 14 years and will retire at the end of June. Panike was praised for the work he has done while leading the fiscal, nutrition and organizational sides of the school district's operations.

"The La Grande School District is deeply thankful for the work of Chris Panike — he has been a mentor, leader and source of strength to many in our organization, and he also also been a loyal friend to many of us. His impact on our organization will be felt for many years to come," said Madril, quoting a nominator.

**John Frieboes, North Powder School District:** Frieboes, the district's maintenance supervisor, is completing his 43rd year with the North Powder School District. Madril said Frieboes' dedication and pursuit of perfection have ensured safe buildings for students and future students.

"The pride John takes in providing for the safety and well-being of students and staff is reflected throughout all the facilities (in the school district)," Madril said, "from the 1937 gym to the 2019 middle/high school."