

TODAY

Today is Thursday, June 10, the 161st day of 2021. There are 204 days left in the year.

TODAY'S HIGHLIGHT IN HISTORY:

On June 10, 1963, President John F. Kennedy signed into law the Equal Pay Act of 1963, aimed at eliminating wage disparities based on gender.

ON THIS DATE:

In 1692, the first execution resulting from the Salem witch trials in Massachusetts took place as Bridget Bishop was hanged.

In 1922, singer-actor Judy Garland was born Frances Ethel Gumm in Grand Rapids, Minnesota.

In 1935, Alcoholics Anonymous was founded in Akron, Ohio, by Dr. Robert Holbrook Smith and William Griffith Wilson.

In 1942, during World War II, German forces massacred 173 male residents of Lidice, Czechoslovakia, in retaliation for the killing of Nazi official Reinhard Heydrich.

In 1944, German forces massacred 642 residents of the French village of Oradour-sur-Glane.

In 1967, six days of war in the Mideast involving Israel, Syria, Egypt, Jordan and Iraq ended as Israel and Syria accepted a United Nations-mediated cease-fire.

In 1971, President Richard M. Nixon lifted a two-decades-old trade embargo on China.

In 1977, James Earl Ray, the convicted assassin of civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr., escaped from Brushy Mountain State Prison in Tennessee with six others; he was recaptured June 13.

In 1978, Affirmed, ridden by Steve Cauthen, won the 110th Belmont Stakes to claim horse racing's 11th Triple Crown.

In 1991, 11-year-old Jaycee Dugard of South Lake Tahoe, California, was abducted by Phillip and Nancy Garrido; Jaycee was held by the couple for 18 years before she was found by authorities.

In 2004, singer-musician Ray Charles died in Beverly Hills, California, at age 73.

In 2013, jury selection began in Sanford, Florida, in the trial of neighborhood watch volunteer George Zimmerman, charged with second-degree murder in the fatal shooting of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin. (Zimmerman was acquitted.)

Today's Birthdays: Actor Alexandra Stewart is 82. Singer Shirley Alston Reeves (The Shirelles) is 80. Actor Jurgen Prochnow is 80. Media commentator Jeff Greenfield is 78. Actor Frankie Faison is 72. Football Hall of Famer Dan Fouts is 70. Country singer-songwriter Thom Schuyler is 69. Former Sen. John Edwards, D-N.C., is 68. Actor Andrew Stevens is 66. Singer Barrington Henderson is 65. Rock musician Kim Deal is 60. Singer Maxi Priest is 60. Actor Gina Gershon is 59. Actor Jeanne Tripplehorn is 58. Rock musician Jimmy Chamberlin is 57. Actor Ben Daniels is 57. Actor Kate Flannery is 57. Model-actor Elizabeth Hurley is 56. Rock musician Joey Santiago is 56. Actor Doug McKeon is 55. Rock musician Emma Anderson is 54. Country musician Brian Hofeltdt (The Deraliers) is 54. Rapper The D.O.C. is 53. Rock singer Mike Doughty is 51. R&B singer Faith Evans is 48. Actor Hugh Dancy is 46. R&B singer Lemisha Grinstead (702) is 43. Actor DJ Qualls is 43. Actor Shane West is 43. Country singer Lee Brice is 42. Singer Hoku is 40. Actor Leelee Sobieski is 39. Olympic gold medal figure skater Tara Lipinski is 39. Americana musician Bridget Kearney (Lake Street Drive) is 36. Actor Titus Makin is 32. Actor Tristin Mays is 31. Sasha Obama is 20. Actor Eden McCoy is 18.

LOTTERY

Monday, June 7, 2021

Megabucks
22-25-32-34-40-41
Estimated jackpot: \$3.8 billion

Lucky Lines

04-07-10-15-18-22-25-29
Estimated jackpot: \$54,000

Win for Life

39-42-51-65

Pick 4

1 p.m.: 8-0-5-5
4 p.m.: 4-7-3-7
7 p.m.: 2-9-3-4
10 p.m.: 0-4-8-0

Tuesday, June 8, 2021

Mega Millions

09-22-39-41-54
Mega Ball: 19
Megaplier: 3
Estimated jackpot: \$20 billion

Lucky Lines

02-08-10-14-18-21-26-31
Estimated jackpot: \$55,000

Pick 4

1 p.m.: 1-4-6-3
4 p.m.: 1-2-9-0
7 p.m.: 3-3-4-8
10 p.m.: 9-7-9-6



Alex Wittwer/The Observer

Christine Courtright waters potted plants at the Union County Fairgrounds on Monday, June 7, 2021. Courtright has been volunteering at the fairgrounds for nearly 50 years, and now the La Grande Lions Club are stepping up to take over her role as floral caretaker for the fairgrounds.

Lending a helping hand

Lions Club steps up to assist Union County Fairgrounds with flowers

By DICK MASON

The Observer

LA GRANDE — The Union County Fair has changed significantly in the past four decades but one thing which has remained constant is the presence and inspiration of Christine Courtright.

Courtright has been a volunteer for the fair for 47 years and today remains as dedicated as ever to it. Health issues, however, are making it harder for her to work as much as she previously has.

Enter the La Grande Lions Club, which is extending a hand to Courtright. Members of the Lions Club are taking over much of the planting and care of the many dozens of flowers at the Union County Fairgrounds. This is work Courtright had done single handedly for decades, labor the Lions Club started taking over Monday, June 7 with a planting day.

“We are taking this on as a

community service project,” said Brent Lewis, one of six La Grande Lions Club members who worked Monday, July 7, at the fairgrounds.

Courtright is more than delighted for the Lions Club’s work.

“I can’t see the fairgrounds without flowers,” she said.

The flowers planted June 7 were donated by Imbler High School’s FFA chapter, which is led by advisor J.D. Cant, an agricultural sciences teacher at the school. The flowers, primarily petunias, are ones that were not sold at the chapter’s annual plant sale.

Courtright oversaw the work day at the fairgrounds, one of her favorite places.

“I enjoy spending time here. It is kind of a soothing place,” she said.

Courtright’s nearly incomparable volunteer work at the fairgrounds and in the community has not gone unnoticed. She is a two-time winner of the Chamber of Commerce Woman of the Year award. She was honored for her work with the Union County Fair, leadership of 4-H clubs and involvement in the First United Methodist Church and Grande Ronde Hospital.

A decade ago the fair’s textile office building was named in her honor. Such honors have recognized Courtright not only as a volunteer but also a leader of the Union County Fair.

Courtright served in the dual position of fair president and manager for about 25 years from the mid 1970s to the late 1990s. After the positions were split, she continued working as the fair manager. In 2003, she resigned that post and took a position on the Union County Fair’s advisory board, one she still holds.

Lewis said Courtright has a lot of wisdom to share about the fairgrounds and that members of the La Grande Lions Club will be consulting her frequently for advice in the future about planting and caring for the flowers.

The Lions Club’s gardening handiwork will be available for all to see when the Union County Fair opens on Aug. 4 for a four-day run. The fair was cancelled in 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic but is set to be conducted again this year because of declining infection rates.

Rep. Bentz wants a nonpartisan examination of Jan. 6 insurrection

By DICK MASON

The Observer

ISLAND CITY — Second Congressional District Rep. Cliff Bentz ardently believes that a commission should be appointed to investigate the deadly insurrection against Congress on Jan. 6.

“I do not want it covered up,” Bentz said on Monday, June 7, during a visit to Island City.

He said the magnitude of the horrific nature of the event cannot be overlooked. Bentz said he wants to know why so many law enforcement officers were hurt and why steps were not taken to give them more protection. He also wants to know why the National Guard was not called immediately to assist in quelling the riot.

The House voted May 19 for the

creation of an independent commission on the Jan. 6 insurrection when it passed HR 3233. Bentz said an independent investigation is crucial to determining what happened that day, when a violent mob of Donald Trump supporters smashed into the U.S. Capitol to try and overturn President Joe Biden’s victory in the November 2020 election.

Modeled after the investigation into the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, the legislation would have established an independent, 10-member commission that would make recommendations by the end of the year for securing the Capitol and preventing another insurrection.

The bill passed the House 252-175. Bentz was one of 35 Republicans voting with Democrats in support of the commission. A total

of 175 Republicans voted against the bill.

The Senate voted 54-35 for the bill but the legislation failed because it did not get the 60 votes needed to block a filibuster by the Republicans.

Bentz said he supported the legislation because the commission would have five Democrats and five Republicans.

“It would have taken a balanced look at what happened, it would not have been partisan,” he said.

Bentz, who is in his first term, noted that in January there was a similar bill in Congress that also would have created a nonpartisan commission to look into the insurrection and that he also was in favor of it. Bentz, according to his office, voted twice in support of the bill which never made it out of the House of Representatives.



Bentz

NEWS BRIEFS

ODF begins fire season in Northeast Oregon District

LA GRANDE — A drier than normal spring and stretches of warmer than normal weather has prompted Oregon Department of Forestry to begin fire season on private forest lands in Northeast Oregon.

Fire season began at 12:01 a.m., Wednesday, June 9, for forest and range lands protected by ODF’s Northeast Oregon District.

“We’ve been seeing fire conditions and behavior that is more indicative of mid to late July recently,” Joe Hessel, ODF Northeast Oregon forester, said. “The fuel moisture of our dead fuels is already at a point where they will readily burn, and it won’t be long before our grasses have cured. By declaring fire season, we can put measures in place to prevent human-caused fires. We’re already seeing fires caused by lightning, so we need to use the tools we have to minimize other ignition sources.”

The fire season declaration places fire prevention restrictions on landowners and public. Addi-

tionally, fire prevention regulations on industrial logging and forest management activities are also in place.

Lands affected include private, state, county, municipal, and tribal lands in Union, Baker, Wallowa and Umatilla counties along with small portions of Malheur, Morrow and Grant counties within the Northeast Oregon Forest Protection District. This area encompasses approximately 2 million protected acres.

No one injured in early morning fire

LA GRANDE — Nobody was injured in an early morning garage fire in west La Grande Tuesday, June 8.

The fire, reported at 5:20 a.m., broke out in the attic of a garage connected to a home in which four people were in. The occupants escaped after a passerby knocked on the door of the home and warned them about the fire, according to Emmitt Cornford, chief of the La Grande Fire Department.

“Whoever it was did the right thing, that is for sure,” Cornford said.

There were no smoke detectors in the garage and the ones in the home had not gone off yet. The garage suffered extensive damage and the home sustained smoke damage. In addition a room adjacent to the garage suffered water damage, Cornford said.

The blaze was difficult to extinguish at first because it was in the garage’s attic which made it difficult for firefighters to reach.

“It was a bit stubborn,” Cornford said.

Firefighters used a positive pressure fan to help keep the blaze from entering the house, Cornford said.

The cause of the fire remains under investigation.

A total of 15 firefighters from the La Grande and the La Grande Rural fire departments responded to the blaze. Three engines and a ladder truck were sent to the fire.

A crew from Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative arrived shortly after the fire was reported and turned off the home’s power.

— EO Media Group

Library director set to depart

Kip Roberson leaving Cook Memorial Library for position in Wyoming

By DAVIS CARBAUGH

The Observer

LA GRANDE — It was an opportunity that Kip Roberson couldn’t pass up — a chance to take the position of director of library services at the Teton County Library in Jackson, Wyoming.

Roberson moved to La Grande from his previous position in Seattle

at the MidCity West Regional Library, where he missed out on an opportunity to take the job in Teton County years back. Now, the library director is landing his dream job.

That’s not to say

Roberson won’t miss his time at Cook Memorial Library, where he helped La Grande’s library move forward in numerous ways. Roberson has served as library director in La Grande since October 2019 and his last day is set for Friday, June 25.

“In all honesty, I’ve never worked with a better group of employees,” Roberson said.

Roberson grew up in a small rural town in Indiana and has worked in smaller communities for most of his career. The transition to the Teton County Library will involve a bigger staff and larger community of library patrons.

During his time at Cook Memorial Library, the most obvious challenge was the COVID-19 pandemic. The library was forced to close in-person services from mid-March of 2020 until Labor Day in September.

“The staff was willing to try out things,” Roberson said. “Some worked and some didn’t, but we got a lot of comments from patrons thanking us for our safety measures and communication with the community.”

At the beginning of the pandemic, the library allowed patrons to reserve books that could be picked up in a sanitized package at the front doors. Library staff also ran a pop-up library outside in the summer of 2020 and even delivered books and materials.

Roberson credits the challenges presented by COVID-19 for making him stronger as a library director moving forward in his career.

As for nonpandemic-related changes, Roberson led the library to more forward-thinking updates. The library now utilizes outdoor storage lockers to hold materials for patrons that are unable to make it to the library during operating hours.

In addition, the story walk at Riverside Park in collaboration with the parks and recreation department is one of Roberson’s proudest accomplishments. The program encourages families to get together and exercise while also reading together.

“He’s really pushed things other than books, which nobody else has really done a lot of,” said Ryan McGinnis, a collections and technical services employee.

McGinnis, a library employee for more than 20 years, said Roberson has been more forward thinking toward social media and online presence compared to previous library directors.

Cook Memorial completely revamped its website to be more user friendly and also updated its logo scheme. One of Roberson’s biggest impacts on the library will be modernizing the systems to be effective past his time as director.

However, Roberson believes that his biggest accomplishment is something that will actually take place after he departs for the Teton County Library. Cook Memorial’s budget going forward will enable the library to hire two new part-time employees, a large enough staff to reopen on Saturdays.

“The staff will have a lot of pressure taken off,” he said. “They would often have to cancel a program if someone was sick, so having more bodies is a great thing toward better service for our patrons.”

Roberson also said that working in a small community like La Grande has been a rewarding experience because of the interactions and relationships with community members.

“It’s really nice knowing there’s a lot of community support here,” he said.

Cook Memorial Library will look to fill the position of library director as Roberson departs for Wyoming in the coming month.



Roberson