

# MUSIC

Continued from Page 1A

Those teaching the camp's middle school and high school students include Doug Reneau, a member of the Oregon Symphony and an adjunct Portland State University professor. Reneau said the instruction students are receiving is more focused than what they receive in a middle or high school setting.

"In school it is just one of six classes in a day. Here they are receiving six to eight hours of instruction a day. It is more intense," he said.

The sessions are being taught in the middle of Eastern's campus where instrumental sounds are bouncing off Loso Hall, the Hoke Union Building, Eastern's library, Ackerman Hall and other buildings. Reneau likes the acoustical environment the setting provides. He said the setting makes it easier for students to hear themselves.

"If you are in the middle



Alex Wittwer/The Observer

**Trumpet student Raleigh Gessel plays during a practice ensemble held at the Eastern Oregon University commons as a part of Music Camps at Wallowa Lake Reimagined on Tuesday, June 22, 2021.**

of a field the sound disappears," he said.

Reneau said he and other music instructors at the camp have been enjoying the opportunity to teach students in person, something they have not been able to do frequently during the pandemic, since the bulk of middle and high school instruction has been provided online. He said music can be taught one-on-one through video conferencing but having students try to play together has its limits, mainly tech-

nology timing issues prevent instrumental sounds created in different places from being heard in sync.

## Counselors help with focus on teaching

The music camp program has an abundance of counselors which is a big plus, according to instructor Játik Clark, a member of the Oregon Symphony Orchestra and an adjunct professor at Portland State University and Oregon State University. Clark

said the counselors address details that make it easier for instructors to focus on teaching. The counselors, all musicians, also share knowledge.

"Students learn at least as much from them as from the professors," Clark said.

Many of the counselors attended the program as students when it was at Wallowa Lake and now are in college preparing to pursue careers in music, according to Kelly Hardy, manager of the EOU camp. She noted that her daughter, Gracie Hardy, is among the former camp students who is now a counselor preparing for a career in music. Hardy said her daughter has said she would not be pursuing a career in music if not for the Music Camps at Wallowa Lake camp program.

The day camp being conducted at EOU this week is only half the story of the Music Camps at Wallowa Lake this summer. The program will provide another week of day camp music instruction later this summer in West Linn, 10

miles south of Portland. The West Linn offering is being made to accommodate the many students from Western Oregon who have attended the music camps before when they were at Wallowa Lake.

Birnbaum said the move will help the camp program meet COVID-19 safety guidelines. She explained that it will prevent students separated by great distances from coming together to attend the camps, reducing the chance of the spread of COVID-19.

"The state does not want a lot of region intermingling," said Birnbaum, who hopes the music camp program can be returned to Wallowa Lake in 2022.

## Bringing students together

The Music Camps at Wallowa Lake program was founded by Jim Howell, now a retired La Grande High School band teacher, and Larry Johnson, a professional musician from Oregon City, in 1999. Howell and Johnson wanted

students from throughout the state to learn together at a music camp.

"We wanted to bring Oregon together," said Johnson, a teacher at this week's camp.

Johnson said Howell, who now lives in Western Oregon, has a special understanding of how important it is for students to hone their musical skills at camps in the summer if they want to move forward. He also has been adept at inspiring students to do this.

Many of the students attending this week's day camp are doing so with help from grants provided by the Wildhorse Foundation and the Leo Adler Foundation.

"Those grants have been such a big help," Johnson said.

Day camp sessions at EOU begin each day at 9 a.m. The majority of the students attending are from La Grande and many greet the start of sessions with plenty of exuberance.

"There are students waiting here at 8:15 a.m.," Birnbaum said.

# CONCERTS

Continued from Page 1A

it's hard to make money at that capacity," Jennings said. "It costs more to run a show than it does to have a show."

One group HQ has worked with to combat this issue is the National Independent Venue Association, which was created in April of 2020 with the goal of helping concert venues stay afloat during the pandemic.

## Reengaging the community

To deal with the current state of the COVID-19 pandemic, HQ is still enforcing masks at live events. Guests that are sitting or drinking a beverage are allowed to take off their mask while inside the venue.

"I think people need to be responsible for where we're at and it's their job now," Jennings said. "We're advocates for getting vac-

inated and the sooner everyone does, the sooner we can have a fully operational space."

With live concerts seemingly coming back into the fold rather quickly across the US, scheduling artists is now the top priority at HQ. The venue typically receives interest from artists traveling between Boise, Portland and Seattle, with the Treefort Festival in Boise being another big draw for La Grande.

"As of right now the intent is to do more shows," Cimone said. "Right now it's about once a month, but we've got to do more than that. I suspect that we'll have one or two next month and alongside that we're starting open mic nights."

Open mic nights are just one of the many ways that the HQ owners envision the community using the space following the pandemic. The facility's sound system, digital video production and live streaming capabilities open doors for a wide

number of event possibilities in the space.

Jennings, the director and co-founder of the Eastern Oregon Film Festival, also uses the space for film screenings and fundraiser events. The HQ owners are open to booking small gatherings, improv, theatre performances or any other interested proposals.

HQ has been hosting events for roughly three years and has been the home base for EOFF over the last five years. With the pandemic bringing a halt to much of the momentum Jennings and Cimone were able to build over the years, the task now is to reengage the community.

"I see it as a mandatory piece to a thriving community," Jennings said. "It's an essential ingredient to how we can thrive. I'm excited for more of that to happen."

Jennings and Cimone plan on hosting open stage nights for local musicians in addition to the of concerts coming this summer.

# MOVIE

Continued from Page 1A

did visit La Grande in late January 2019 to do research for his part in the movie.

A portion of the movie focuses on Joe Bell's walk, when he gave a number of talks in churches, schools and other places on behalf of his foundation. He talked of the evils of bullying and what can be done to prevent it.

Jadin Bell's family members and friends said bullying drove him to suicide, and they later launched an anti-bullying



The Observer, File

**Before beginning his cross-country walk in 2013, Joe Bell embraces his wife, Lola, beside the tiled palmprint of their late son Jadin in a display made several years ago at Riverside Park.**

campaign called Faces for Change.

Joe Bell premiered at the 2020 Toronto Interna-

tional Film Festival. It was once titled Good Joe Bell, according to the website [www.slashfilm.com](http://www.slashfilm.com).

# DROUGHT

Continued from Page 1A

now, at least in terms of the drought conditions and how it projects onto wildfire risk."

As of Monday, The S-503 Fire was the largest, burning 6,201 acres near the Warm Springs Reservation in Central Oregon. The fire started June 18, and was 10% contained. A cause has not been determined.

In Southern Oregon, the Cutoff Fire started June 19 and has burned 1,150 acres on state forestland about 6 miles north of Bonanza. It is 12% contained, and the cause remains under investigation.

Earlier this month, a pair of lightning-sparked fires in northeast Oregon — the Joseph Canyon and Dry Creek fires — torched 9,195 acres of timber and rangeland. Those two fires were mostly contained June 11.

Meg Krawchuk, an associate professor at the College of Forestry, said conditions on the ground are more characteristic of what firefighters might expect in July, rather than June.

"When we have early and longstanding drought, we're more likely to have fires burning," Krawchuk said.

According to the U.S. Drought Monitor, all of

Oregon is listed in some stage of drought, including 77% in "severe" drought, 36% in "extreme" drought and a little under 5% in the worst category of "exceptional" drought.

The driest conditions are spread over Central and Eastern Oregon, said O'Neill, the state climatologist. Klamath, Deschutes, Crook, Jefferson and Wasco counties all experienced their driest or second-driest spring on record, he said.

In addition, the USDA reports that 80% of the state's cropland and livestock pastures are rated as either "short" or "very short" of soil moisture.

"That's also very concerning right now for a lot of the agricultural and livestock producers here," O'Neill said. "Things are looking a little bit bleak."

Oregon is already coming off of a record fire season in 2020 during which more than 1 million acres burned, particularly in Western Oregon, where a series of post-Labor Day conflagrations fanned by strong easterly winds consumed entire towns.

Lisa Ellsworth, an assistant professor who studies fire behavior and rangeland ecology at the College of Agricultural Sciences, said Oregon is not at the point yet where fire season lasts year-round, as in California.

But the trend toward higher temperatures and more severe drought across the West is having an impact.

"Twenty years ago, when I fought wildland fire, our seasons looked nothing like this," she said.

Erica Fleishman, director of the Oregon Climate Change Research Institute, said it is impossible to pin the trend entirely on climate change, but "the types of weather patterns we're seeing this year are consistent with what has been observed and what is projected as climate continues to change."

"Climate change is a factor," Fleishman said. "We cannot simply pin it all on climate change, but it is a factor."

Hotter and drier weather does not always necessarily mean more fires. There must be a spark, in combination with the right conditions, for wildfire to spread.

Ellsworth said more than 80% of fires in the West are caused by humans, underscoring the need for people to be careful outdoors.

"While we can't do a whole lot about the drought conditions we are facing right now, we can do a whole lot about the ignition sources ... managing people and managing that potential for wildfire as people are out there recreating," she said.

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