

TODAY

On Dec. 7, 1941, the Empire of Japan launched an air raid on the U.S. Navy base at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii as well as targets in Malaya, Hong Kong, Guam, the Philippines and Wake Island; the United States declared war against Japan the next day.

In 1787, Delaware became the first state to ratify the U.S. Constitution.

In 1909, chemist Leo H. Baekeland received a U.S. patent for Bakelite, the first synthetic plastic.

In 1917, during World War I, the United States declared war on Austria-Hungary.

In 1946, fire broke out at the Winecoff Hotel in Atlanta; the blaze killed 119 people, including hotel founder W. Frank Winecoff.

In 1972, America's last moon mission to date was launched as Apollo 17 blasted off from Cape Canaveral.

In 1982, convicted murderer Charlie Brooks Jr. became the first U.S. prisoner to be executed by injection, at a prison in Huntsville, Texas.

In 1987, 43 people were killed after a gunman aboard a Pacific Southwest Airlines jetliner in California apparently opened fire on a fellow passenger, the pilots and himself, causing the plane to crash. Soviet leader Mikhail S. Gorbachev set foot on American soil for the first time, arriving for a Washington summit with President Ronald Reagan.

In 1988, a major earthquake in the Soviet Union devastated northern Armenia; official estimates put the death toll at 25-thousand.

In 2001, Taliban forces abandoned their last bastion in Afghanistan, fleeing the southern city of Kandahar.

In 2004, Hamid Karzai was sworn in as Afghanistan's first popularly elected president.

In 2017, Democratic Sen. Al Franken said he would resign after a series of sexual harassment allegations; he took a parting shot at President Donald Trump, describing him as "a man who has bragged on tape about his history of sexual assault." Republican Rep. Trent Franks of Arizona said he would resign, after revealing that he discussed surrogacy with two female staffers.

In 2018, the man who drove his car into counterprotesters at a 2017 white nationalist rally in Virginia was convicted of first-degree murder; a state jury rejected defense arguments that James Alex Fields Jr. acted in self-defense.

Ten years ago: Rod Blagojevich, the ousted Illinois governor whose three-year battle against criminal charges became a national spectacle, was sentenced to 14 years in prison. (A pardon from President Donald Trump freed Blagojevich from prison in 2020, after he had served eight years.) Veteran character actor Harry Morgan, 96, died in California.

Five years ago: President-elect Donald Trump selected retired Marine Gen. John Kelly to head the Department of Homeland Security, Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt to lead the Environmental Protection Agency, the former chief executive of World Wrestling Entertainment, Linda McMahon, to run the Small Business Administration and Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad to be the new U.S. ambassador to China. Time magazine named Trump its Person of the Year.

LOTTERY

Friday, Dec. 3, 2021

Megamillions

22-45-48-58-61

Megaball: 13

Megaplier: 5

Jackpot: \$122 million

Lucky Lines

1-8-12-16-18-24-26-31

Jackpot: \$35,000

Pick 4

1 p.m.: 2-2-1-5

4 p.m.: 4-5-9-8

7 p.m.: 2-6-2-1

10 p.m.: 1-5-8-3

Saturday, Dec. 4, 2021

Powerball

10-40-45-56-67

Powerball: 2

Power Play: 2

Jackpot: \$280 million

Megabucks

13-15-18-23-25-44

Jackpot: \$6.6 million

Lucky Lines

3-7-9-16-17-21-27-29

Jackpot: \$36,000

Pick 4

1 p.m.: 6-8-6-2

4 p.m.: 5-4-4-2

7 p.m.: 9-8-3-8

10 p.m.: 3-0-0-7

Win for Life

16-31-46-69

Sunday, Dec. 5, 2021

Lucky Lines

2-8-10-14-17-23-28-29

Estimated jackpot: \$37,000

Pick 4

1 p.m.: 9-6-1-4

4 p.m.: 9-9-5-7

7 p.m.: 8-1-2-5

10 p.m.: 7-9-2-5

‘A full-community event’

Festival of Trees returns in person, raises funds for Soroptimists

By **DAVIS CARBAUGH**

The Observer

LA GRANDE — In the season of giving, local businesses and individuals gave back to a good cause during La Grande's annual Festival of Trees.

Guests packed the Blue Mountain Conference Center on Friday, Dec. 3, to bid on a variety of decorated Christmas trees and items to raise money for the Soroptimist International of La Grande, a nonprofit that works to improve the lives of women and girls through social and economic change. The organization also hosted a Family Fun Day on Dec. 4, which included photos with Santa Claus and a number of activities for children.

"It's a full-community event," said Di Lyn Larsen-Hill, the co-chair of the festival.

Nearly 300 individuals took part in the 35th annual Festival of Trees auction, which raised funds for La Grande Soroptimist's work around the community. The auction included 19 trees, each of which included decorations and goodies below the tree. From Pendleton Round-Up tickets and Girl Scout cookies to hardware appliances, the theme of each tree presented a unique aspect of local businesses and organizations.

Last year, during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the event was held virtually. Despite the setback, the online fundraiser was a success. For that reason, the Soroptimists established a hybrid format this year in which a variety of items were up for bid online for the



Davis Carbaugh/The Observer

Kevin Loveland emceeds the La Grande Festival of Trees on Friday, Dec. 4, 2021. This year's event auctioned off 19 decorated Christmas trees to a crowd of nearly 300.

weekend, while the Festival of Trees auction took place in person.

Festival chair Shayla Rollins said the added space from moving the non-tree items to a virtual format is a trend that will likely continue in years to come. The added space allowed for 270 attendees to join the gala, which is an increase of about 20 individuals from years past.

"Since we put the auction stuff online, we had more room," she said. "We could fit more tables and have more trees."

According to Larsen-Hill, the auction was one of the most successful overall fundraisers that the La Grande Soroptimists have hosted since the organization was founded in La Grande in 1987. Trees sold for anywhere from around \$1,000 to a package from Legacy Ford that sold for \$6,500. The tree included a four-month demo of a brand-new Ford Bronco.

All in all, local businesses and organizations combined their efforts to donate toward the Soroptimists' cause. A multitude of businesses funded trees, as well as placing the winning bids. Rollins and Larsen-Hill noted the

importance of the continued local support.

"We see a lot of repeat businesses coming in," Rollins said. "Even some of the first-year businesses went above and beyond this year."

Christmas in July

The Festival of Trees is the biggest fundraiser of the year for La Grande Soroptimists, but the preparation begins well before the holidays. The group of 16 committee members started planning for the 2021 event in the peak of summer.

It's absolutely our biggest fundraising event," Rollins said. "We start in the summer, around July."

Larsen-Hill noted that the Soroptimists have smaller events and fundraisers throughout the year, which helps the organization put on the Festival of Trees.

"We sell raffle tickets and do a variety of activities to make this possible," she said.

Kids take part in the holiday fun

Following the gala and tree auction, kids from around the community flocked to the conference center for their own day of fun and festivities on Saturday, Dec. 4.

Children in attendance could speak with Santa about their wish lists and take part in a number of activities such as cookie decorating and science experiments. According to Family Fun Day chair Pat Wood, the Soroptimists found fun ways to make the event more pandemic-friendly. For instance, instead of sitting on Santa's lap, kids could come up to his desk and drop off their Christmas lists.

In Mrs. Claus' kitchen, all ages decorated their own cookies with frosting. Members of the Eastern Oregon University chemistry department guided children through science experiments, where the participants created slime.

"Kids really look forward to it and we're able to bring in canned goods, which is the admission for the event," Wood said.

Larsen-Hill noted that since the first Festival of Trees in 1987, more than \$600,000 has been raised for local community projects and scholarships.

"Our goal is to empower women and raise funds to help local causes," Larsen-Hill said. "All the donations go right back into the community."

Slip sliding away in Union County



Alex Wittwer/The Observer

A vehicle went off the Union-Cove Highway and landed on its side, one of several crashes reported in the Grande Ronde Valley Monday, Dec. 6, 2021. Dispatch reported at least 20 calls during the morning hours due to roughly six different crashes on the county's slippery roads.

NEWS BRIEFS

Enterprise man dies in single-vehicle crash Dec. 5

WALLOWA COUNTY — An Enterprise man died in a traffic crash at around 5 a.m. Sunday, Dec. 5, according to Oregon State Police.

OSP and emergency personnel responded to a single-vehicle crash on

Highway 3 near milepost 13 at about 4:51 a.m.

The response team found that a northbound pickup driven by Christopher Thacker, 36, of Enterprise, drifted across the highway and eventually crashed into a tree about 200 feet from the road. Thacker was pronounced dead at the scene.

OSP, Enterprise Fire,

Wallowa County Emergency Medical Services and Oregon Department of Transportation responded to the crash.

City suspends downtown parking enforcement

LA GRANDE — The city of La Grande announced it is suspending enforcement of the two-

hour downtown parking limit.

The suspension will be in place through Christmas Day, Dec. 25. The suspension is in place to make it easier for people to shop for the holidays in downtown La Grande, according to La Grande City Manager Robert Strope.

— *The Observer*

Reward offered for information on wolf poisonings

The Observer

LA GRANDE — Conservation and animal rights groups are stepping forward to help the Oregon State Police solve a case involving eight gray wolves that were fatally poisoned in Union County over the past year.

The groups are offering a combined reward of \$36,000 for information leading to a conviction in the case, according to a press release.

"Poisoning wildlife is a profoundly dangerous and serious crime, putting imperiled species, companion animals and people all at risk," said Bethany Cotton, conservation director for Cascadia Wildlands. "We call on those with information about this reckless killing to come forward to protect Oregon's wildlife and our communities."

The \$36,000 in combined rewards are being offered by Wolves of the Rockies, Center for Biological Diversity, Cascadia Wildlands, Defenders of Wildlife, Humane Society of the United States, Northeast Oregon Ecosystems, Oregon Wild, Predator Defense and Wild Earth Guardians.

"This is a cowardly and despicable act," said Brooks Fahy, executive director of Predator Defense, an Oregon-based national wildlife advocacy nonprofit. "It is absolutely critical that the perpetrator of this crime be caught and prosecuted to the full extent of the law. The Oregon State Police should aggressively pursue all leads that will help bring the individual who carried out this atrocity to justice."

The poisoning case dates back to February when Oregon State Police reported troopers from its Fish and Wildlife Division division received information from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife about a dead collared wolf. Troopers responded to the area and found five dead wolves — three males and two females. It was later determined the wolves were from the Catherine Pack.

The wolves were southeast of Mount Harris, within Union County. The five wolves were collected and transported to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Forensics Lab in Ashland to determine the cause of death. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Forensics Lab concluded the wolves had been poisoned.

Fish and Wildlife troopers in March again received information from ODFW personnel of a wolf collar emitting a mortality signal in the same general location. A search of the area located a deceased female wolf, which was sent to the USFWS lab for testing. The female wolf was dispersing from the Keating Pack.

Two more collared wolves were found dead in Union County after the initial incidents. In April, a deceased adult male wolf from the Five Points Pack was located west of Elgin, and in July a young female wolf from the Clark Creek Pack was discovered northeast of La Grande. Toxicology reports from the USFWS lab confirmed the presence of poison in each wolf.

"We are furious and appalled. These poisonings are a significant blow to wolf recovery in Oregon. Such a targeted attack against these incredible creatures is unacceptable and we hope our reward will help bring the criminals who did this to justice," said Sriesti Kamal, senior northwest representative for Defenders of Wildlife.

MORE INFORMATION

Anyone with information about the poisonings is asked to contact OSP through the Turn-In Poachers Hotline at 1-800-452-7888, or email TIP@state.or.us, referencing case number SP21-033033.