

**TODAY**

**In 1630**, English colonists in the Massachusetts Bay Colony first sampled popcorn brought to them by a Native American named Quadequina for their Thanksgiving celebration.

**In 1732** (New Style date), the first president of the United States, George Washington, was born in Westmoreland County in the Virginia Colony.

**In 1784**, a U.S. merchant ship, the Empress of China, left New York for the Far East to trade goods with China.

**In 1935**, it became illegal for airplanes to fly over the White House.

**In 1959**, the inaugural Daytona 500 race was held; although Johnny Beauchamp was initially declared the winner, the victory was later awarded to Lee Petty.

**In 1967**, more than 25,000 U.S. and South Vietnamese troops launched Operation Junction City, aimed at smashing a Vietcong stronghold near the Cambodian border. (Although the communists were driven out, they later returned.)

**In 1980**, the "Miracle on Ice" took place in Lake Placid, New York, as the United States Olympic hockey team upset the Soviets, 4-3. (The U.S. team went on to win the gold medal.)

**In 1987**, pop artist Andy Warhol died at a New York City hospital at age 58.

**In 1997**, scientists in Scotland announced they had succeeded in cloning an adult mammal, producing a lamb named "Dolly." (Dolly, however, was later put down after a short life marred by premature aging and disease.)

**In 2010**, Najibullah Zazi, accused of buying beauty supplies to make bombs for an attack on New York City subways, pleaded guilty to charges including conspiring to use weapons of mass destruction. (Zazi faced up to life in prison but spent nearly a decade after his arrest helping the U.S. identify and prosecute terrorists; he was given a 10-year sentence followed by supervised release.)

**In 2016**, the City Council of Charlotte, North Carolina, voted 7-4 to pass a new law allowing transgender people to choose public bathrooms that corresponded to their gender identity.

**In 2020**, Bernie Sanders scored a resounding win in Nevada's presidential caucuses, cementing his status as the Democrats' front-runner.

**Today's Birthdays:** Actor Paul Dooley is 94. Actor James Hong is 93. Actor John Ashton is 74. Actor Miou-Miou is 72. Actor Julie Walters is 72. Basketball Hall of Famer Julius Erving is 72. Actor Ellen Greene is 71. Former Sen. Bill Frist, R-Tenn., is 70. Former White House adviser David Axelrod is 67. Actor Kyle MacLachlan is 63. World Golf Hall of Famer Vijay Singh is 59. Actor-comedian Rachel Dratch is 56. Actor Paul Lieberstein is 55. Actor Jeri Ryan is 54. Actor Thomas Jane is 53. TV host Clinton Kelly is 53. Actor Tamara Mello is 52. Actor-singer Lea Salonga is 51. Actor Jose Solano is 51. International Tennis Hall of Famer Michael Chang is 50. Rock musician Scott Phillips is 49. Singer James Blunt is 48. Actor Drew Barrymore is 47. Actor Liza Huber is 47. Rock singer Tom Higgenson (Plain White T's) is 43. Rock musician Joe Hottinger (Halestorm) is 40. Actor Zach Roerig is 37.

**LOTTERY**

**Friday, Feb. 18, 2022**

**Megamillions**

6-11-50-63-68

Megaball: 17

Megaplier: 4

Jackpot: \$75 million

**Lucky Lines**

4-7-10-16-19-21-25-29

Jackpot: \$30,000

**Pick 4**

1 p.m.: 6-5-2-8

4 p.m.: 1-3-4-7

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

10 p.m.: 6-2-8-0

**Saturday, Feb. 19, 2022**

**Powerball**

3-10-15-33-42

Powerball: 11

Power Play: 2

Jackpot: \$37 million

**Megabucks**

7-21-30-45-46-47

Jackpot: \$1.9 million

**Lucky Lines**

2-8-10-14-19-21-25-31

Jackpot: \$31,000

**Pick 4**

1 p.m.: 6-0-5-4

4 p.m.: 4-0-1-5

7 p.m.: 2-3-8-8

10 p.m.: 5-8-9-3

**Win for Life**

5-52-62-72

**Sunday, Feb. 20, 2022**

**Lucky Lines**

3-7-11-13-17-24-27-31

Estimated jackpot: \$32,000

**Pick 4**

1 p.m.: 6-9-8-9

4 p.m.: 2-9-9-1

7 p.m.: 4-3-9-0

10 p.m.: 4-1-0-5

**PRODUCTION ISSUES**

Due to production issues, the Saturday, Feb. 19, Observer was printed missing two pages. The story below did not run in its entirety and is being reprinted here. More stories are on Page A3.

2022 STARTED WET, BUT  
**DROUGHT WORRIES LINGER**

Dry January aggravates dry conditions across Northeastern Oregon

By **KATY NESBITT**

For EO Media Group

**P**ENDLETON — December and January storms set up the winter of 2022 to be cold and wet, but several weeks without significant snow or rain are creating concerns of another drought year.

Northeastern Oregon is faring better than Central and Southern Oregon, with cold temperatures preventing the early January snowfall from melting. Snow in the last few days has helped inch up snowpack and snow water equivalent levels for the Blue and Wallowa mountains.

According to the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service website, monthly streamflow and reservoir conditions for January in the Umatilla-Walla Walla-Willow Basin were above average. Two bodies of water in the southern region of the basin near Heppner are considerably higher than the rest of the basin: Willow Creek is at 187% and Rhea Creek is at 142% of the 30-year median.

Farther south, the North Fork John Day River at Monument is recording 83% of its 30-year median. The basin has one stronghold for water: Camas

Creek near Ukiah at 346% of the median.

The Grande Ronde-Burnt-Powder-Imnaha Basin is averaging between 83% and 95% of the 30-year median with one anomaly: Bear Creek, outside of Wallowa, is at 216%.

Snowpack has been holding up, despite the lack of precipitation in the last five weeks.

In the Blue Mountains between La Grande and Pendleton, Emigrant Springs has 45 inches of snowpack and is 148% above average with 10% snow water equivalent.

High Ridge Snotel east of Pendleton has 52 inches of snowpack, 5% below its average, but with 33% snow water equivalent. Milkshakes Snotel on the Washington state line has 71 inches of snowpack, which is 87% of normal with 35% snow water equivalent.

In the Wallawas, Mount Howard has 27 inches of snowpack, 25% below average with 32% snow water equivalent. On the south side of the range, Moss Springs Snotel is recording 49 inches of snowpack, which is 15% below average with a snow water equivalent of 32%.

In Baker County, Schneider Meadows Snotel is recording

22% below normal precipitation and has 55 inches of snowpack with a 33% snow water equivalent.

While the snowpack and water levels look pretty good right now, Northeastern Oregon is facing down the barrel of another drought year, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. According to www.drought.gov, Wallowa County was down 0.69 inches of precipitation in January. The entire county is considered to be in severe drought status, and 44.36% of the county is experiencing extreme drought conditions.

Union County is down 0.27 inches of its average precipitation. The entire county is considered to be under severe drought conditions while 4.3% is experiencing extreme drought. And Umatilla County is down 0.2 inches of precipitation from a normal January. This puts all of the county under severe drought conditions, with 33.77% considered to be under extreme drought conditions.

The extended forecast for Northeastern Oregon calls for 33% to 40% below normal precipitation with a 40% to 50% chance of above normal temperatures.

**Weeks of subfreezing temperatures have held snow in the higher elevations of Northeastern Oregon, as is evident in this February 2022 photo of the Wallowa Mountains. Despite reasonable snowpack levels in the high country, however, most of the region is still facing severe drought conditions.**

Katy Nesbitt/For EO Media Group



**Police arrest pair suspected of mail theft**

The Observer

**LA GRANDE** — Police said officers have located a pair of suspects believed to be connected to a string of mail thefts in the La Grande area.

George Kelly, 26, and Gracee Shelley, 22, were both arrested Sunday, Feb. 20, and charged with 61 counts of mail theft and 61 counts of conspiracy to commit mail theft, according to a La Grande Police Department press release.

The arrests were made

after La Grande police conducted an investigation with the assistance of the Union County Sheriff's Office and the Oregon State Police following reports that Shelley and Kelly were allegedly on a crime spree and had stolen mail and packages from many different addresses in La Grande and other portions of Union County.

During the arrest, La Grande law enforcement officers collected enough stolen mail to fill two copy paper boxes, according to the press release, and are

working diligently to return all stolen mail and packages to their owners.

"I am proud of the citizens who were able to report this incident and give us a good suspect vehicle description," said the lead investigator in the case, acting La Grande Police Department Sgt. Brandon Boucher.

Shelley and Kelly were traveling in a blue Chevy Impala.

Boucher added that he was impressed with the hard work investigating officers

are putting into the case and that "we were able to stop any more mail thefts from occurring."

The arrests of Kelly and Shelley were made at about 8 p.m. after La Grande police officers responded at 7:25 a.m. in the area of South 20th Street for a report of mail theft.

An investigation of the case is ongoing and there may be more charges. Anyone with information that could assist the investigation should contact Boucher at 541-963-1017.

**EOU COVID-19 numbers continue to plateau**

By **DAVIS CARBAUGH**

The Observer

**LA GRANDE** — As the academic calendar progresses toward the end of February, COVID-19 case numbers at Eastern Oregon University have come to a stall.

The university, which experienced 182 cases throughout January, totaled just four cases during the period from Sunday, Feb. 13, through Feb. 20.

"Our employee numbers, as well as our student numbers, are going

down," said Vice President of Student Affairs Lacy Karpilo. "We're still having cases, but it has dropped significantly."

Cases among off-campus students remained at zero through the week-long period. The category saw the sharpest rise during the omicron spike and currently stands at 158 cases.

Cases among university employees rose from 52 to 55, while the total number of on-campus cases remained at 42 throughout the week.

"We're still asking people to be mindful

because it's still out there and spreading, but we're very excited to see it go down," Karpilo said.

Karpilo noted that out of the limited cases in the last two weeks, no faculty or staff experienced hospitalizations or severe illness.

The university has made a big push to up testing efforts during the omicron spike, which Karpilo said will likely continue until numbers remain steady. EOU has distributed 2,778 COVID-19 tests for a 10.5% positivity rate.

During the last week, the

university recorded one off-campus isolation/quarantine.

In lieu of the state announcing it will lift the mask mandate at the end of March, Eastern will make that decision from within campus leadership.

"Our decision will be made just as every other decision has been made, partnering with our local health authority, seeing our numbers and the county numbers," Karpilo said. "We're going to use the same evidence-based process and then we'll make our decision."

**Local Lion receives top honor**

Kathy Oliver given prestigious Helen Keller award from Elgin Lions Club

By **DICK MASON**

The Observer

**ELGIN** — Kathy Oliver has a limited amount of free time, which is understandable because she has a lot on her plate — including virtually all of Eastern Oregon.

Oliver, a member of the Elgin Lions Club, is serving as governor for Lions Clubs International's District 36-G in Oregon. The district, which has 30 clubs, encompasses most of Eastern Oregon.

The Summerville resident, who is about three months from completing her one-year term as governor, has handled her responsibilities as District 36-G governor masterfully, according to Gerald Hopkins, a member of the Elgin Lions Club.

"She is doing a wonderful job," he said.

Hopkins credits Oliver with making many connections and helping Lions clubs in the district work together amid the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

On Monday, Feb. 14, Oliver was presented with the Helen Keller award, one of the most prestigious a Lions Club can present to anyone, Hopkins said. Clubs are able to present the Helen Keller award only if they make a \$1,000 donation to the Lions Sight and Hearing Foundation.

Elgin Lions Club members voted to give Oliver the award in an election where ballots were cast secretly. Oliver was caught off guard when told she had won the award.

"It had not entered my mind. It was a total surprise," said Oliver, whose husband, Steve, is also a member of the Elgin Lions Club and a past District 36-G governor.

Hopkins said the award is one Kathy Oliver richly deserves.

"She is a great person. Everyone in the club really loves her," said Hopkins, also a former district governor.

Oliver has been a member of the Elgin Lions Club for 15 years, including serving several years as its president. She has helped lead a number of club events, many of which raise money for the Lions Sight and Hearing Foundation.

"She is working on projects all the time. Whenever we have an event she is always there," Hopkins said.

Lions Clubs International has a 97-year connection to Keller, who although blind and deaf was a tireless advocate for those with disabilities. Keller spoke at the International Lions Clubs Convention in Ohio on June 30, 1925. She challenged the Lions to become "Knights of the blind in the crusade against darkness." The organization accepted the challenge and today has many internationally recognized programs aimed at preventing blindness.

Oliver said the award is especially meaningful to her because it is named in honor of the woman who inspired the Lions Clubs International to become what it is today.

"It means a lot to me," she said. "I feel very honored."

Oliver hopes to help her club continue reaching out to people in need around Northeastern Oregon after she steps down as governor.

"There are so many people here who need help," she said.



Oliver