

TODAY

In 1924, Congress passed, and President Calvin Coolidge signed, a measure guaranteeing full American citizenship for all Native Americans born within U.S. territorial limits.

In 1941, baseball's "Iron Horse," Lou Gehrig, died in New York of a degenerative disease, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis; he was 37.

In 1953, the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II took place in London's Westminster Abbey, 16 months after the death of her father, King George VI.

In 1961, playwright and director George S. Kaufman, 71, died in New York.

In 1962, Soviet forces opened fire on striking workers in the Russian city of Novocherkassk; a retired general in 1989 put the death toll at 22 to 24.

In 1966, U.S. space probe Surveyor 1 landed on the moon and began transmitting detailed photographs of the lunar surface.

In 1979, Pope John Paul II arrived in his native Poland on the first visit by a pope to a Communist country.

In 1981, the Japanese video arcade game "Donkey Kong" was released by Nintendo.

In 1997, Timothy McVeigh was convicted of murder and conspiracy in the 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City that killed 168 people. (McVeigh was executed in June 2001.)

In 1999, South Africans went to the polls in their second post-apartheid election, giving the African National Congress a decisive victory; retiring president Nelson Mandela was succeeded by Thabo Mbeki.

In 2011, a judge in Placerville, California, sentenced serial sex offender Phillip Garrido to life in prison for kidnapping and raping Jaycee Dugard; Garrido's wife, Nancy, received a decades-long sentence.

In 2016, autopsy results showed superstar musician Prince died of an accidental overdose of fentanyl, a powerful opioid painkiller.

In 2020, defying curfews, protesters streamed back into the nation's streets, hours after President Donald Trump urged governors to put down the violence set off by the death of George Floyd. Police said four officers were hit by gunfire after protests in St. Louis that began peacefully became violent. The bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington sharply criticized Trump for staging a visit to St. John's Church across from the White House after authorities had cleared the area of peaceful protesters. Mayors and governors from both parties rejected Trump's threat to use the military against protesters.

Today's birthdays: Actor Ron Ely is 84. Filmmaker and movie historian Kevin Brownlow is 84. Actor Stacy Keach is 81. Actor Charles Haid is 79. R&B singer Chubby Tavares (Tavares) is 78. Movie director Lasse Hallstrom is 76. Actor Jerry Mathers is 74. Actor Joanna Gleason is 72. NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman is 70. Actor Dennis Haysbert is 68. Comedian Dana Carvey is 67. Actor Gary Grimes is 67. Pop musician Michael Steele is 67. Rock singer Tony Hadley (Spandau Ballet) is 62. Actor Liam Cunningham is 61. Actor Navid Negahban is 58. Singer Merrill Bainbridge is 54. TV personality-producer Andy Cohen ("The Real Housewives" TV franchise) is 54. Rapper B-Real (Cypress Hill) is 52. Actor Paula Cale is 52. Actor Anthony Montgomery is 51. Actor-comedian Wayne Brady is 50. Actor Wentworth Miller is 50. Rock musician Tim Rice-Oxley (Keane) is 46. Actor Zachary Quinto is 45. Actor Dominic Cooper is 44. Actor Nikki Cox is 44. Actor Justin Long is 44. Actor Deon Richmond is 44. Actor Morena Baccarin is 43. R&B singer Irish Grinstead (702) is 42. Rock musician Fabrizio Moretti (The Strokes) is 42. Olympic gold medal soccer player Abby Wambach is 42. Singer-songwriter ZZ Ward is 36. Rapper/actor Awkwafina is 34. Actor Brittany Curran is 32. Actor Sterling Beaumon is 27.

CORRECTIONS
The Observer works hard to be accurate and sincerely regrets any errors. If you notice a mistake in the paper, please call 541-963-3161.

Going up

New elevator provides access at Union High School

By **DICK MASON**
The Observer

UNION — Union School District Superintendent Carter Wells is a high-energy, passionate person.

Wells cares deeply about helping young people succeed, and about giving students, staff and community members with mobility issues the opportunity to easily enter and leave the Union School District's buildings.

"We want everyone to be able to move around the school district with dignity," Wells said.

This is why he is elated with Union High School's latest addition — a south-side elevator that stops at each of the school's three floors.

"This is a very exciting time for us," Wells said. "It really almost feels surreal. I'm a little awestruck."

Some staff members feel the same way. Wells noted that one person who has been on the Union School District's staff for 25 years said he never thought he would see the day when Union High School had its own elevator.

Wells had hoped the elevator would be installed and operating by late 2021. Unfortunately, supply chain issues caused by the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in shipping and installation delays.

The elevator is contained in a concrete masonry block with steel supports and has a one-layer brick veneer.

The brick veneer matches the bricks outside Union High School. The intent of this was to help the building, built in 1912, maintain its original appearance. The Wenaha Group, the construction manager for the Union School District's bond projects, did this at the recommendation of Union's history commission.



Dick Mason/The Observer

Union School District Superintendent Carter Wells on Thursday, May 26, 2022, uses a key card to open the doors of Union High School's new elevator.



Dick Mason/The Observer

Union High School's new elevator, shown here on Thursday, May 26, 2022, stops at all three floors of the classroom building.



Dick Mason/The Observer

An outer shaft was installed for Union High School's new elevator, shown here on Thursday, May 26, 2022. Its look is designed to match the appearance of Union High School's classroom building.

"The community really respects and cares about the high school building," said Cassie Hibbert, project manager for the Wenaha Group.

Those who have used the elevator over the past month include staff members with mobility issues, a student recovering from an injury and the school district's custodial staff,

which is using it to transport supplies from floor to floor. All Union School District staff members have code keys that allow them to use the elevator. Students can also use the elevator if they have a condition that limits their mobility.

The elevator, which has been operating for about a month, was purchased and installed with

money from a \$4 million bond Union School District voters approved in 2019. The bond, for which the school district received a \$4 million matching grant from the state, has paid for many major renovations and additions in the Union School District, including ones making the high school gym handicapped accessible.

La Grande High commencement set for June 4

Rich McIlmoil will speak to class of 2022

By **DICK MASON**
The Observer

LA GRANDE — The approximately 110 students set to graduate from La Grande High School this weekend will enjoy a unique distinction — theirs will be the first class in three years to be part of a commencement ceremony not impacted by COVID-19 protocols.

This will be a big switch from 2020 when students received their diplomas while in vehicles with their families in a drive-thru event. In 2021, graduation was conducted in LHS's gym but attendance was restricted so that social distancing rules could be met. Graduates were allotted five tickets each to give to family members and friends for commencement.

No tickets will be needed to attend the Saturday, June 4, graduation ceremony because COVID-19 infection rates have fallen dramati-



The Observer, File

Graduates embrace in front of La Grande High School following commencement on Saturday, June 5, 2021.

ically. Commencement starts at 10 a.m. and the doors to the gym will open at 8:30 a.m.

Rich McIlmoil, La Grande High School art teacher and head football coach, was selected by LHS students to be the graduation speaker. The educator said he will be addressing "a great group of kids."

McIlmoil said this year's senior class has a number of excellent leaders and is filled with hard-working students.

"A lot of the students are driven," he said.

Those who will be saluted at the June 4 commencement include the class of 2022's valedictorians — Derek Begin, Braden Carson, Cole Jorgensen, Isabelle Kump and Carter Perry. All have earned straight A's throughout high school.

McIlmoil also said many students in the class of 2022 are versatile individuals who have participated in an array of activities, including art, music and athletics.

He noted that has gotten to know a wide variety of students in the class with different interests, talents and backgrounds because he is both a football coach and an art teacher.

"It is not a common duo," he said. He believes the students in the class of 2022 are closer because of the pandemic.

"They have had to be strong together," McIlmoil said.

The educator said the challenges students have faced due to COVID-19 have made them stronger.

"They will be using their trials as fuel to push them through life," McIlmoil said.

IN BRIEF

Drowning death at Wallowa Lake ruled a suicide

WALLOWA LAKE — The death of an Enterprise man found April 15 has been ruled a suicide, according to an email from Wallowa County Sheriff Joel Fish.

Fish said Tuesday, May 31, that no foul play is suspected in the drowning death of Devin Nelson Woempner-Velarde, found in his car submerged in Wallowa Lake at Wallowa Lake State Park off the boat ramp.

On April 19 the sheriff said it appeared that Woempner-Velarde drove off the ramp, and likely before April 15.

"The ignition was on and the car was in drive," Fish said at the time. "It looks like he drove off."

The sheriff had said the cause of death "appears to be drowning," but he was awaiting a determination

from the state Medical Examiner's Office. Fish said on May 31 that the determination was suicide.

Cove to have second, final reading of resolution

COVE — The Cove City Council will conduct a second reading of Resolution 2022-2 during its regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday, June 7. The meeting is set for 7 p.m. at Cove City Hall, 504 Alder St.

Resolution 2022-2 would establish fines, fees and assessments against violations of the city's ordinances and regulations. Passage of the second reading on June 7, according to Cove Mayor Sherry Haeger, would provide the city the first piece needed for the establishment of a municipal court. Passage of the second reading would lead to a vote to approve the resolution in July.

After systemizing fines, the next step would then involve the approval of a resolution to create a municipal court. Two readings and a vote of approval by the council would also be required to create the court.

Cove's proposed municipal court would be in place to address violations of the nuisance ordinance, the only ordinance the city has. Cove's nuisance ordinance was approved and went into effect in 2021.

Copies of Resolution 2022-2 are available for public inspection from 8:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. at city hall. Instructions on how to connect to the council meeting virtually are available on the city's website, www.citycove.org.



Haeger

Wyden, VA to hold virtual town hall

Weekend meeting is first of three veterans-focused town halls in Eastern Oregon

The Observer

WASHINGTON — U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden announced in a press release on Tuesday, May 31, the first of three online town halls for Eastern Oregon veterans, their families and veterans service providers. Participants will ask top Veterans Administration officials health care questions, including about the agency's proposals to reduce physical and mental health services in the region.

The first veterans-focused town hall meeting for Umatilla, Union, Wallowa, Baker and Morrow counties is scheduled for Saturday, June 4, at 10 a.m.

The town hall follows a letter the Democratic senator wrote earlier this month about



Wyden

VA recommendations that the Veterans Administration Medical Center in Walla Walla, Washington, be reclassified to a community-based outpatient clinic and to move its 31-bed residential rehabilitation treatment program 180 miles north to Spokane.

"The message I heard consistently at my recent town halls in Eastern Oregon made it clear that veterans have lacked a real opportunity to share their legitimate concerns about how these proposed changes will reduce access to both physical and mental health care," Wyden said in the release. "Veterans deserve topnotch care here at home thanks to their service, and I'm committed to working with them and the VA through these veterans-only town halls to brainstorm solutions to secure that quality and accessible care."

The VA already has a community-based outpatient clinic in La Grande, which is frequently used by veterans in the rural region. The proposed changes to the Walla Walla center would make it similar to the La Grande clinic, and local veterans who need services beyond the outpatient clinic would have to travel to Spokane instead. Wyden has cited winter conditions, lack of public transit and weather-related highway closures as reasons for concern over the proposed limitations of the Walla Walla clinic.

In a letter addressed to Dr. Teresa Boyd of the VA Northwest Health Network Office and Walla Walla VAMC Director Scott Kelter, Wyden wrote that he finds these changes "particularly troubling to my constituents in Oregon, who often trek across state lines to receive crucial care from the VA. Adding 180 miles to their commute will effectively cut off access to behavioral health and substance use treatment services."

Wyden also included several other points from the local town halls in the letter, such as delays in travel reimbursement and technical failures related to the electronic health record system. The letter included seven questions in regard to how the proposed downgrade at the Walla Walla Clinic would negatively impact veterans in Eastern Oregon.

Wyden, Kelter and Boyd will participate in the town hall. The link to submit questions is <https://bit.ly/3M28YIe>. The link to watch the June 4 meeting is <https://bit.ly/38RQMnb>.

LOTTERY

Monday, May 30, 2022
Megabucks
9-17-26-38-40-46
Estimated jackpot: \$1.5 million

Lucky Lines
2-8-10-16-20-23-25-31
Estimated jackpot: \$48,000

Win for Life
27-33-38-77

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

Tuesday, May 31, 2022
Mega Millions
6-15-41-63-64
Mega Ball: 24
Megaplier: 4
Estimated jackpot: \$189 million

Lucky Lines
4-5-9-13-18-21-27-32
Estimated jackpot: \$49,000

Pick 4
1 p.m.: 2-2-3-1
4 p.m.: 6-8-3-0
7 p.m.: 1-4-5-6
10 p.m.: 2-2-8-6