



The Eagle/Angel Carpenter

Weston Moulton, 3, left, and his brother Ryder, 5, of Mt. Vernon make Christmas ornaments with Rick Callahan and his wife, JJ Collier, of John Day Saturday at the Blue Mountain Hospital Auxiliary bazaar at the Grant County Fairgrounds.

Holiday bazaar sees elbow-to-elbow rush

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

There was a marked increase of holiday hustle and bustle at Saturday's Blue Mountain Hospital Auxiliary bazaar held at the Grant County Fairgrounds pavilion and Keerins Hall in John Day.

The event, organized by Michele Bishop of Canyon City, had 63 vendors in the pavilion and 16 in Keerins Hall.

"We had eight new vendors this year," said Bishop, who was voted in as the auxiliary's vice president in September. This is her second year spearheading the

annual event.

Funds raised through table rentals and a drawing for handmade items donated by vendors benefit the auxiliary's projects.

"It raises money to do great things for the community," Bishop said, adding that donations last year helped

stretchers for the Blue Mountain Hospital ambulances, water stations at the hospital to refill water bottles, as well as senior center meals.

"It was busier than usual," she said. "Everyone seemed to be having fun, and it was packed at times. I think the vendors were happy."



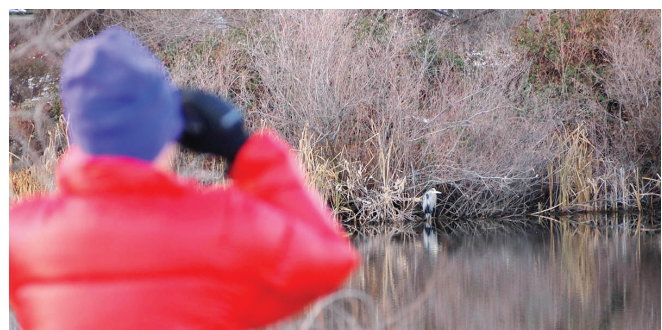
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Jim Bay of John Day purchases an item from Jamie Brown, owner of St. Serpent Herb Farm in John Day, at Saturday's Blue Mountain Hospital Auxiliary bazaar held at the Grant County Fairgrounds pavilion.



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Three-year-old Freidrick Maurer of John Day is delighted with a small gift from Santa, a wristband. The youngster asked Santa for some games for Christmas while at Saturday's bazaar in John Day.



Contributed photo/Peter Meyer

Barb Meyer spots a great blue heron during the Christmas Bird Count in 2018.

Christmas Bird Count planned for Dec. 14

By Tom Winters
For the Blue Mountain Eagle

The 39th John Day Christmas Bird Count will be Saturday, Dec. 14.

Participants will meet at The Outpost restaurant no later than 7 a.m., earlier for those wanting breakfast. The compilation and monthly bird club meeting will be at Cecil and Irene Gagnon's home that evening starting at 5:30 p.m. Everyone is welcome that evening for the potluck dinner. Participants should dress warmly and be prepared for the day's weather. They should also bring binoculars, field guide, lunch and beverages as most parties will be out the full day and out of town. For more information, contact Tom Winters at 541-542-2006 or tjwinters1951@gmail.com.

For additional birding experience, Joel Geier will conduct the Antone Christmas Bird Count Monday, Dec. 16. This count is centered west of the John Day Fossil Beds. Participants need to meet at the Cant Ranch House at the Fossil Beds by 8 a.m. The compilation will take place after 4:15 p.m. For more information, contact Geier at joel.geier@peak.org.

Since the Christmas Bird Count began 120 years ago, it has relied on the dedication and commitment of volunteer citizen scientists. The Christmas Bird Count season is Dec. 14 through Jan. 5 each year, and each compiler chooses a date within this period. There is a specific methodology to the counts, but everyone can participate. The count takes place within "count circles," which focus on specific geographical areas. The John Day "circle" boundaries are Four Corners and Beech Creek Road on the north, the John Day River crossing west of Mt. Vernon, the Canyon Creek crossing 5 miles south of Canyon City and Hall's Hill to the east. Each circle is led by a count compiler, Tom Winters being the compiler for the John Day count. Beginning

birders can join a group that includes at least one experienced birdwatcher. People whose homes are within the boundaries of a count circle can stay home and report the birds visiting feeders if they have arranged to do so with the compiler.

Prior to the turn of the 20th century, hunters engaged in a holiday tradition known as the Christmas "side hunt." They would choose sides and go afield with their guns, and whoever brought in the biggest pile of feathered (and furred) quarry won. Conservation was in its beginning stages in that era, and many observers and scientists were becoming concerned about declining bird populations. Beginning on Christmas Day 1900, ornithologist Frank M. Chapman, an early officer in the then-nascent Audubon Society, proposed a new holiday tradition: a "Christmas Bird Census" that would count birds during the holidays rather than hunt them.

So began the Christmas Bird Count. Thanks to the inspiration of Chapman and the enthusiasm of 27 dedicated birders, 25 Christmas Bird Counts were held that day. The locations ranged from Toronto, Canada, to Pacific Grove, California, with most counts in or near the population centers of northeastern North America. Those original 27 Christmas counters tallied around 90 species on all the counts combined. The data collected by observers over the past century allow Audubon researchers, conservation biologists, wildlife agencies and other interested individuals to study the long-term health and status of bird populations across North America. When combined with other surveys such as the Breeding Bird Survey, it provides a picture of how the continent's bird populations have changed in time and space over the past hundred years. The long-term perspective is vital for conservationists. It informs strategies to protect birds and their habitat, and helps identify environmental issues with implications for people as well.

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