

Our Community

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Ham radio enthusiasts hit the airwaves

Nationwide on-air open house draws 40,000 people

By TAMMY MALGESINI
COMMUNITY EDITOR

Ham radio operators across the United States and Canada connected Saturday in the largest annual on-the-air event.

An open house of sorts held each year on the fourth weekend in June, Amateur Radio Field Day features local clubs and ham radio enthusiasts who set up temporary transmitting stations in public places to demonstrate the purpose and capability of ham radios. Upwards of 40,000 people participate each year.

"We try to contact as many people as we can. We operate for 24 hours if we can stay awake that long," Jim Davis said with a laugh. "What we're doing is the granddaddy of events."

Davis and other members of the Hermiston Amateur Radio Club gathered Saturday at Boardman Marina Park. Using fishing poles, nylon paracord and lead weights, Don Drayton, club vice president, said they utilized the park's tall and abundant trees to set up antenna lines.

While operating ham radios is a hobby for many, they also serve a practical purpose. In the event of a natural disaster — which might result in the loss of electricity, cell phone towers, landlines and internet access — amateur radio operators are called on to assist with communications and emergency man-



Whitley Smith, far right, makes contact with a ham radio operator out of California during Saturday's Amateur Radio Field Day Saturday at Boardman Marina Park. Looking on from left are Bill Quick, Brenden Smith, 15, and Don Drayton.

agement, Davis said.

"We can be on the air in an hour anywhere we go," Drayton said.

When trees aren't available, Drayton said he has an 80-foot mast in his truck. Several of the club members, he said, have travel trailers with all their supplies, including generators, batteries or solar power systems. In the event of an emergency, everything is ready to go, Drayton said.

Another purpose for Saturday's event, Davis said, is to make sure all their equipment is working. Many of the local amateur radio operators will be on-air during the Aug. 21 eclipse.

In a May interview, Andrew Phelps, Oregon Office of Emergency Management director, told the *East Oregonian* that they are using the celestial happening as an emergency response exer-

cise. With a predicted influx of a million people flocking to the path of totality in Oregon, he said they plan to activate the emergency coordination center. It will provide valuable experience in planning for and evaluating emergency responses to disasters, such as an earthquake along the Cascadia Subduction Zone.

The partnerships, Drayton said, is beneficial to residents in Umatilla and Morrow counties, as well as the rest of the state. He encourages more people to obtain a license to operate ham radios — especially in rural counties.

The Hermiston Amateur Radio Club meets the second Monday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at Umatilla County Fire District #1's Station 23, 78760 Westland Road, Hermiston. For more information, visit www.ai7ho.org.

Hams "hogged" airtime

According to the American Radio Relay League, referring to amateur radio operators as "hams" was coined in the early days.

Amateur users competed for time and signals supremacy in each other's receivers with other radio operators at government stations, ships and coastal stations. Often, the amateur radio operators could jam other operations with their powerful stations. Frustrated operators referred to the amateur "interference" as hams for hogging up the time. — www.arrl.org



FILE PHOTO

John Kopta, right, cheers on another member of The Power Team as he bends a steel rod during a 2015 performance in Irrigon. The 1983 Hermiston High School graduate will speak and perform at a trio of upcoming faith-based events in Stanfield.

HHS graduate powers into faith-based event

HERMISTON HERALD

John Kopta, a senior member of the Power Team, a Christian strength-based ministry, is featured during a trio of outdoor events at Bard Park in Stanfield.

The Ultimate Youth Smash 2017 kicks off the free program Saturday from 6:30-8:30 p.m. In addition to Kopta's strength-based presentation and message, the evening also includes a local band and singing group made up of members from area youth groups. Sponsored by Stanfield and Echo churches and Hermiston area youth leaders, middle school and high school students are encouraged to attend the powerful presentation.

Kopta will speak Sunday at 9 a.m. during the Stanfield and Echo Community Worship Service. With a focus on uniting believers, "The Church Worshipping Together" is sponsored by five local churches. The Anchor Point Seventh-day Adventist worship team will lead a program of lively music. Refreshments will follow the community service.

And, on Tuesday,

July 4, Kopta will again demonstrate feats of strength during "Strength in Christ." During the free program, which starts at 7 p.m., Kopta will demonstrate how faith is stronger than people's fears and failures. Guest musician Tony Long-Drew will sing several patriotic numbers.

A 1983 Hermiston High School graduate, Kopta has spoken to more than 1 million people in 30 different countries. The former Bulldog football player and wrestler joined The Power Team two years after graduation. He said the strength-based ministry provides an opportunity to grab people's attention, which allows them to minister to their hearts.

The event is sponsored by Anchor Point Seventh-day Adventist Church, Stanfield Baptist Church, Crossroads Community Church, Hope Presbyterian Church and Echo Community Church.

Everyone is invited to bring a blanket or lawn chair and attend the family-friendly events. For more information, contact stanfieldag@eoni.com or 541-449-3434.

Landing Days brings back Friday entertainment to Umatilla

By JADE McDOWELL
STAFF WRITER

Landing Days was back in full swing last weekend after faltering a year ago.

The annual celebration of Umatilla's history was kicked off Friday night instead of Saturday morning for the first time in several years. And Saturday's schedule was much more full than last year, when the event was first canceled due to lack of volunteers and then brought back in a very limited form.

Only a handful of people had shown up by the

time the first band started playing at 6 p.m., but more were slowly trickling in as they got off work.

"Tonight might be a little slow but we're building up to tomorrow," said Mark Ribich, Umatilla Chamber of Commerce interim president and city councilor.

He said organizers were excited about the "fantastic weather" for the weekend.

Friday night featured food vendors, a beer garden and bands The Outsiders and Grupo Viajero. High school students Bianca Espain and Jacquelin Brown showed up early and said

the part they were most excited about was the food.

Espain said she has been to Landing Days before and her other favorite part of the event was the fireworks.

"Over here is just a beautiful view of the river and with the fireworks, it's just so pretty," she said.

Brown said she had never been to Landing Days before but was looking forward to it.

Barb and Robert White of Hermiston said they had never been to Landing Days before, but had talked to someone at the marina about it recently and were

planning on attending both days. After enjoying an elephant ear, they were particularly interested in the craft vendors, watching the Round-Up City Cloggers perform, listening to the live music and watching the fireworks.

Saturday's Landing Days events drew large crowds for activities including a parade, contests, bands, dance groups, beer garden, food and craft vendors, wood carvers auction and kids' talent show. The event wrapped up with a fireworks show over the marina after dark.



STAFF PHOTO BY JADE McDOWELL

The Outsiders perform at Umatilla Landing Days on Friday at Marina Park.

Altrusa of Hermiston elects new officers

HERMISTON HERALD

Gearing up for its 41st year since organizing, Altrusa International of Hermiston recently elected Nancy Lauck to serve as president for 2017-18.

Other officers include Dawn Long, first vice president; Lindsay Lloyd, second vice president; Jackie Dunlap, treasurer; Winnie Earl, assistant treasurer; and Naamah Franke, secretary.

The group, which was sponsored by the Pendleton club at its founding on May 14, 1977, gives back to the community through a variety of programs, including those that focus on literacy, education and environmental concerns. In addition to working on local projects, local Altrusans are often seen participating in fund-



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED BY CONNIE FERRANTI

Altrusa of Hermiston recently elected new officers for 2017-18. The are (front) Jackie Dunlap, treasurer; Winnie Earl, assistant treasurer; (back) Dawn Long, first vice president; Nancy Lauck, president; Naamah Franke, secretary; and Lindsay Lloyd, second vice president.

raisers in order to raise money to filter back into the community.

Altrusa International is celebrating its centennial year. Founded by Mamie L. Bass in Nashville, it became an international organization 1935. Originally

called Altrusa Institute, the name "Altrusa" is derived from combining altruism and USA.

For more information, contact hermistonaltrusa@gmail.com, visit www.districttwelve.altrusa.org or search Facebook.

July 7th-9th

ATHENA CALEDONIAN GAMES

Featuring the Celtic folk rock band *Guess When* & *Michael Mullen's Trio of One*

Friday July 7
5:30-7:30pm
Caledonian Dinner in the City Park

7:30pm
Candle lighting ceremony and the blessing of clans, family and the festival.

Caledonian Athena Games

A Family Event with Scottish Music, Dancing & Sport
www.athenacaledoniangames.com

Saturday July 8
8:00am - 8:00 pm

Parade, Vendors Entertainment in the Park
Dancing, Piping & Scottish Athletic Competitions
Kids' Games
Story Tellers
Caledonian Tattoo

Sunday July 9
Beginning at 9:30am

Kirkin' O' the Tartan
Wool Demonstrations
Pipe Band
Horseshoe Tournaments