

# The Nugget

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## Volunteers tackle trail work in Sisters Country

By Bill Bartlett  
Correspondent

This past weekend saw 20 volunteers from the Sisters Trails Alliance (STA) and OTTA (Oregon Timber Trail Association) conduct their first joint trail-improvement work party. Judging by the smiles and laughter exhibited by the group, it was party-like as they toiled in three sections. The weather added to the joy being expressed by the workers who ranged in age from 13 to 66. The work group came from as close as Sisters and as far as Bellingham, Washington.

See TRAIL WORK on page 14

## Celebrating eighth grade...



PHOTO BY JERRY BALDOCK

Sisters Middle School's eighth-grade class gathered at Scout Lake last week for the Eighth Grade Olympics. Events included arts and athletics and gave the students and their teachers an opportunity to mark the end of the middle-school years and the transition to high school. See story, page 4.

## Sisters athletic director earns honors

By Charlie Kanzig  
Correspondent

Outlaws Athletic Director Gary Thorson is the Oregon 4A Athletic Director of the Year for 2020-2021.

The Oregon Athletic Directors Association (OADA) state athletic director of the year award was established to recognize outstanding athletic directors in recognition of contributions to interscholastic athletics at the local, state, and national levels made while serving as an athletic director at an Oregon high school.

See THORSON on page 22

## Folk festival kicks off summer concert series

The Sisters Summer of Festival series kicks off on Friday, June 25 with a co-bill featuring Americana songstress and singer Sierra Ferrell playing as a trio, and the dynamic Freddy & Francine with a full band.

Ferrell has made waves in the acoustic music world with her signature singing style and aesthetic, while Freddy & Francine are celebrating a new record, "I Am Afraid to Die," recorded pre-pandemic.

The Sisters Folk Festival (SFF) has made a reputation for introducing artists to its audience just as their star is rising. That's very much the case with Sierra Ferrell.

Crista Munro, the Festival's executive director, said that a friend who promotes events in Colorado urged her to get Ferrell booked.

"He said, 'You've got to check her out; you've got to book her while you still can.'"

Sure enough, Ferrell has caught fire.

"She is the most-booked artist in the Americana-Bluegrass-folk scene this summer," Munro said.

The Festival's audience is primed to get back to a regular diet of live music.

"Can't wait," said longtime Sisters Folk Festival attendee Kay Grady. "I just can't wait to all be back together again, and see all the people we love and have missed."

Paul Bertagna is especially excited to see the return of Freddy and Francine. The artists have performed at the Sisters Folk Festival — and also turned in an epic performance when rain forced them to move from Fir Street Park into The Belfry, where they proceeded to share the history of their artistic collaboration in a cycle of song.

"I saw them when they came to the festival — blew the doors off," Bertagna said. "How can you not like these guys? Unbelievable."

See SFF on page 6

## Sisters youth is a rodeo champion

By Jim Cornelius  
Editor In Chief

Gabby Bartolotta of Sisters rode her 7-year-old quarter horse Jess to a state championship in pole bending in Oregon Junior High Division Rodeo competition in Burns May 28-30. The 14-year-old rodeo champ is headed to nationals in Des Moines, Iowa, June 20-27.

Pole bending is a timed event in which the horse and rider run a weaving course between six poles set up in a line — similar to a slalom course in skiing.

Bartolotta's championship came down to the last go-round.

"I was doing pretty good," she said. "Me and this other girl were neck-and-neck. It was really close. If I'd have knocked a pole, I'd have been out of it."

A clean, fast run gave her the title.

In the championship crunch, success often comes down to managing nerves. That's something Gabby knows how to do.

"That's the main thing, no



PHOTO PROVIDED

Gabby Bartolotta won a state championship in pole bending in Oregon Junior High Division Rodeo.

matter what," she said. "And be happy with your horse no matter what."

It's the love and connection between horse and rider that forms the foundation of the sport for Bartolotta. It's a passion she discovered on her own.

"It's her," said her mom Julie. "It's her passion; her journey."

"I've been around horses all my life," Gabby said,

"but I just got into rodeo six years ago, seven years ago... It's just the bond, the connection with your horse. It's hard to explain."

"She matches my energy. Whenever I'm having a bad day, she's having a bad day... When I'm having a good day, she's the best horse ever."

Jess is just one of 17

See BARTOLOTTA on page 22

## Inside...

Letters/Weather.....	2	Announcements.....	8	At Your Service.....	11-13	Fun & Games.....	16	Classifieds.....	18-20
Meetings.....	3	Entertainment.....	9	Obituaries.....	15	Crossword.....	17	Real Estate.....	20-24