

HERMISTON

Song, dance help pay swim team's bus costs

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
East Oregonian

Raising transportation funds used to be a dreaded chore for the Hermiston High School swim team, but on Saturday night they managed to put the "fun" in fundraising.

The third annual HHS swim team variety show — featuring three hours of song and dance — helped raise the money to cover most of the team's \$5,000-a-year transportation costs to and from practice at Blue Mountain Community College's indoor pool in Pendleton.

Lynn Hamblin, wife of swim coach Kevin Hamblin and organizer of the talent show, said six years ago the school district told the team it couldn't continue to cover the cost of their daily commute. Early fundraisers were "miserable," she said.

"This has evolved from collecting cans in the cold month of January to something to give back to the community," she said.

On Saturday night a few swimmers performed on stage, but most of them provided technical support and backstage help for the performers who donated their time to the show.

Nattalie Gray, a sixth grader from Armand Larive Middle School, was one of those performers. She said before the show that she wasn't nervous because she had plenty of performing experience at church and elsewhere. Earlier this year she sang the national anthem at a Heppner football game at Kennison Field, she said, and Representative Greg Smith (R-Heppner) was so impressed that he asked her to come sing at the Capitol during this year's legislative session.

Gray chose to sing "Brave" by Sara Bareilles.

"I like it because I think it encourages people sometimes to be brave," she said. "When I sing it I think of someone who is hiding, and I sing it to them."

Misha Meyer, a fourth grader from Highland Hills Elementary, also stepped up to the plate, opening the show with the national an-



The Hermiston High School swim team boys perform a synchronized "swimming" number to wrap up the Swim Team Variety Show.

Staff photo by Jade McDowell



HHS Swim Team Variety Show winner Corrina Tiboni, accompanied by Josh Rist, belts out Whitney Houston's "I Have Nothing."

Staff photo by Jade McDowell



Andrea Chapman tap dances to "Mr. Pinstripe Suit" during the HHS Swim Team Variety Show.

Staff photo by Jade McDowell

them and later performing "Try" by Colbie Caillat.

"I like performing," she said before the show. "It makes me happy."

Shortly before her, the crowd heard from Marti Plum, another Armand Larive sixth grader, who sang "Human" by Christina Perri. She shared her secret for keeping the nerves to a minimum during a performance:

"When I'm up there singing I always stare someone down in the audience," she said. "I just pick someone."

Most of the performers were returning acts, but Kodie Arnold, a Hermiston High School flautist who is blind, said after last year's

show turned out to be such a fun event she was disappointed she wasn't a part of it.

This year she played "Maybe" by Allison Krauss on the flute and later accompanied singer Claire Wilson on the piano.

In the end, though, it was singer Corrina Tiboni, performing Whitney Houston's "I Have Nothing" accompanied by Josh Rist, who stole the show. She won first place for the second year in a row after the audience placed \$186 worth of votes in her jar.

Second place went to the Filipino Dancers, who used bamboo poles to perform a

traditional Tikling dance.

The \$3,700 raised by ticket sales, voting, a raffle and treats sold at intermission will help fund the team's journey to Pendleton for another year, but coach Kevin Hamblin said the team would rather not make the commute, which means they often don't get home until 12 or 13 hours after leaving for school in the morning.

"One of these days we're going to be up here asking for donations for a new indoor pool," he said.

Contact Jade McDowell at jmcdowell@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4536.

PENDLETON

Officials resolve to get public involved

Infrastructure, airport remain high on priority list

By **ANTONIO SIERRA**
East Oregonian

After years of neglect, Pendleton city officials say municipal infrastructure will be front and center in 2015.

"2015 could be the biggest year on record for public works," Public Works Director Bob Patterson said.

Besides a capital improvement bond that the city aims to put on the November ballot, many officials said getting the public involved in discussion on Pendleton's aging infrastructure and other issues will be key.

Communication between the city and public wasn't always strong in 2014.

Special public meetings to discuss a \$10 million bond proposal and the future of the Blue Mountain Recovery Center were sparsely attended.

Public dissatisfaction boiled over in November, when residents from Southwest Perkins Avenue presented a petition at a meeting requesting the city address the crumbling portions of the residential street. Multiple Perkins residents said the city failed to fix the roads after years of complaints made to staff members.

Mayor Phillip Houk said he wants Pendleton to be known as a transparent city that works with its residents, and councilwoman Jane Hill said the council may need to consider new ways of communicating to achieve those goals.

Hill said that despite interest in their community, many Pendletonians can't take time out of their busy lives to attend meetings or seriously study the city's budget.

On a personal level, Hill

said she would spend more time in 2015 soliciting input from constituents.

"There's no silver bullet for improving communication," she said.

According to Patterson, an ideal year would see local government and public approve designated funding for the entirety of the city's crumbling infrastructure.

But for Patterson, simply setting priorities over what needs to be addressed would be a step in the right direction.

Public input will be increasingly important in 2015, which will see a variety of issues come before the council

outside of public works.

Councilwoman Becky Marks said she would like to see a more defined budget for the Pendleton UAS Range and progress on making the venture self-sustaining.

The city has invested more than a half million dollars into the project, which has already conducted tests but hasn't been able to collect revenue while airport officials try to sort through Federal Aviation Administration regulations.

Pendleton's mayor said those issues should be solved over the course of the year.

Coupling the range's progress with potential eco-

"There's no silver bullet for improving communication."

— Jane Hill, Pendleton councilwoman

economic development, Houk said the city's investments in UAS, Barnhart Road and the airport area in general should become more clear this year.

Regardless of the challenges that lay ahead, many officials were confident in the city's direction.

"I think its going to be a great year of progress," Hill said.

Contact Antonio Sierra at asierra@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0836.

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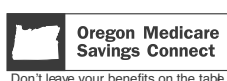
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Suspect's girlfriend charged with helping him avoid arrest

By **KRISTIN M. KRAEMER**
Tri-City Herald

The girlfriend of a Kennewick shooting suspect is accused of driving him to a relative's home in Hermiston, and later tipping him off that police knew where he was hiding.

Aquarius S. Gibbs, 24, denied seeing her boyfriend allegedly shoot her child's father on Thanksgiving eve, but told investigators she assumed it was him, court documents said.

The Pasco woman has pleaded not guilty in Benton County Superior Court to one felony count of first-degree rendering criminal assistance. Her trial is scheduled March 2.

Her boyfriend, Tyree Q. Houfmuse, has a Jan. 20 trial date for first-degree assault and second-degree unlawful possession of a firearm. The assault charge carries a firearm enhancement, which means mandatory prison time if convicted.

The Nov. 26 shooting outside the Village Tavern in Kennewick left Anthony L. Asselin paralyzed from the chest down. One of the bullets that hit him is lodged in his spine, according to his family.

Gibbs is Asselin's former girlfriend and mother to one of his children.

Asselin, 29, is a father of four and a local rapper who goes by the name "Redd 100."

A witness told Kennewick police that Houfmuse and Asselin had a "beef" while inside the tavern and eventually took their argument outside, court documents said. That's when Houfmuse shot Asselin several times without any physical provocation, documents said.

Houfmuse had been at the bar with Gibbs.

Another witness said

the friction between the men was because "Asselin thinks that (Houfmuse) furnishes drugs to Ms. Gibbs, which affects her parenting," court documents said.

After the shooting, Houfmuse got into Gibbs' car and drove off, documents said.

Gibbs, who was interviewed Nov. 29 by detectives, admitted that the two men were arguing before she heard several loud pops and saw Asselin on the ground. She said Houfmuse initially was behind the wheel as they fled the scene, but she took over and drove him to a Hermiston house, court documents said.

Gibbs initially gave an incorrect address for Houfmuse's relative, then changed the information after Hermiston police looked into the location. She said Houfmuse was aware she was talking to investigators, but he didn't know she would give up his whereabouts, documents said.

Detectives warned Gibbs not to tip off Houfmuse that she had revealed his location. However, authorities tried to arrest Houfmuse at that address on Dec. 1 and learned he left beforehand "in an apparent effort to avoid the police," court documents said.

Gibbs was a passenger in the vehicle that Houfmuse fled in, documents said.

Houfmuse was arrested later that day by federal marshals at a Hermiston apartment complex.

Gibbs reportedly told investigators that her boyfriend said he was "sorry for the shooting."

Gibbs is out of custody on her personal recognizance while awaiting trial. Houfmuse remains in the Benton County jail with bail set at \$250,000.

SUBMIT COMMUNITY NEWS

Submit information to: community@eastoregonian.com or drop off to the attention of Tammy Malgesini at 333 E. Main St., Hermiston or Renee Struthers at 211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton. Call 541-564-4539 or 541-966-0818 with questions.

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