

EOU board searches for president

Pendleton's David Nelson chair of board of trustees

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

As chair of the Eastern Oregon University board of trustees, Pendleton's David Nelson is in an interesting position right now.

Technically the newly created board doesn't have the authority to govern EOU until July 1, when the Oregon State Board of Higher Education closes its doors in favor of a separate governing board for each school in the public university system. But there are some important decisions on the horizon — most notably replacing interim university president Jay Kenton at the end of the school year — where the newly created EOU board would like to have a say.

"It's a very awkward situation," Nelson said.

The EOU board's search committee has been working with search firm Witt/Kieffer to recruit a pool of candidates for university president. Nelson said the board's search committee, of which he is also chair, has narrowed down a list of approximately 10 candidates to bring out for a campus tour and interview this month. The committee plans to make its top choice known in May.

The ultimate hiring decision still

rests with the State Board of Higher Education, however.

Nelson said he hopes that the state takes into account the board of trustees' wishes, considering the board will become the new governing authority of EOU the same day the new president is expected to take office.



Nelson

When the state board and the University of Oregon's board disagreed over what type of president U of O needed, the end result was that when the university's board of trustees became the school's legal governing authority in July 2014 it immediately got rid of state-appointed president Michael Gottfredson.

"At EOU we want to avoid that situation," Nelson said.

Boards of trustees for Oregon's smaller public universities don't get the power to run their schools until July 1, but many boards are already up and running with agreements to implement certain policies as soon as they officially have the authority to do so. Southern Oregon University's board voted last week to raise tuition by five percent in July.

There are a lot of uncertainties,

Nelson said, over exactly how things will play out when the State Board of Higher Education disbands. That's especially true now that former Governor John Kitzhaber has resigned, leaving questions over whether Governor Kate Brown will leave his overhaul of the higher education system intact.

"We're anticipating there are going to be some changes," Nelson said.

However, he said even if some tweaks are made to the system, having EOU governed by its own board of trustees should allow the university the flexibility to build up programs like Eastern Promise, the college credit program that has been getting high praise from the state.

"I think in the end it's going to be a good thing because it will give Eastern Oregon University some independence," he said. "We can identify ourselves. ... It's very crucial when we get a new president to start making people aware that EOU is there and provides really good services."

Nelson, a former state senator, is joined on the 13-person board by fellow Umatilla County residents Jer Pratton of Hermiston and Roberta Conner of Pendleton. In 2013 about 10 percent of EOU students were from Umatilla County.

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

BRIEFLY

AARP offers Smart Driver class in Ione

IONE — The new and enhanced driving refresher course from AARP Driver Safety will be offered in Ione.

AARP Smart Driver is Thursday, April 9 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Blue Mountain Community College, 295 W. Second St., Ione. Participants are asked to arrive by 8:45 a.m. to complete paperwork. The fee is \$15 for AARP members and \$20 for non-members. Although the class is geared for those over 50, everyone is welcome to attend.

Those attending will learn defensive driving skills, safety strategies, how to stay current with driving technology and how to address age-related changes in vision, hearing and reaction time. Some insurance companies offer a discount for those who complete the course. Participants are encouraged to check with their provider to see if they are eligible.

To register, call 541-989-8141. For more information, call 888-227-7669.

Stanfield cancels Saturday breakfast

STANFIELD — There will be no Stanfield Community Center breakfast during the Easter weekend.

The next breakfast is planned for Saturday, May 2 from 7-10 a.m. at 225 W. Roosevelt, Stanfield. The cost is \$5 for a full breakfast and \$3 for a light meal.

For more information, call the center at 541-449-1332 or Pam Cooper at 541-449-3227.

Bird club highlights hummingbirds

PENDLETON — A presentation about hummingbird banding and biology is planned at the upcoming Pendleton Bird Club meeting.

The public is invited as Carl Rudeen, a licensed hummingbird bander from Idaho, shares his experiences and shows dazzling photos of colorful hummingbird species in Eastern Oregon and Idaho.

A potluck is planned Thursday, April 9 at 6:30 p.m. at the First Christian Church, 215 N. Main St., Pendleton. People are encouraged to bring a dish to share. The meeting begins at 7:30 p.m.

For more information,

contact styletoil@eoni.com or visit www.pendletonbirders.org.

Altrusa offers book giveaway at outdoor show

PENDLETON — Children in preschool through third grade are invited to "Go Fishing: Hook a Book" during an activity presented by the Altrusa International of Pendleton literacy committee.

The free book giveaway is held in conjunction with the Pendleton Home & Outdoor Show Saturday, April 11 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday, April 12 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Altrusa booth at the Pendleton Convention Center, 1601 Westgate.

For more information, contact Deborah Wagner at deborah@graybealdistributing.com.

Grow your own greens with hydroponics

PENDLETON — Want to grow your own greens at home, but don't have space for a garden?

Hydroponics is the answer. Richard Bertram will show even those with black thumbs how easy it is to grow greens at home with a mix of nutrients, water, light and air — no soil required. Hydroponics: A Better Way To Grow Your Food At Home is Saturday, April 25 from 12:30-2:30 p.m. at Pendleton Center for the Arts, 214 N. Main St.

Bertram will share the history and science behind hydroponics systems, what makes plants grow and how various growing systems work. Participants will then build a simple Kratky hydroponics system and transform it into an art piece with paint and collage materials. Each participant will take home a self-contained basil or lettuce container that will produce all season, and the knowledge to start your own greens at home.

Cost to attend is \$10 for members and \$15 for non-members, plus a \$15 materials fee. Registration is requested; call 541-278-9201 or visit the arts center.

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.

PENDLETON

Portland Gay Men's Chorus brings Celebrate Oregon Tour to town

By TAMMY MALGESINI
East Oregonian

A powerful choral work depicting the life of California's first openly gay elected public official is featured in a production by the Portland Gay Men's Chorus.

The group will bring its Celebrate Oregon Tour, which features two acts, to Pendleton Saturday, April 11 at 7 p.m. at the Vert Auditorium, 500 S.W. Dorion Ave. General admission is \$15, seniors are \$10 and students are \$5 — although no one will be turned away due to lack of funds. Money raised during the event will help support the Pendleton chapter of PFLAG (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays).

"I Am Harvey Milk" weaves the story of Milk's life leading up to his assassination in 1978. And "A Brighter Day" embraces lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender history and celebrates the pockets of light that have brought inclusion and acceptance to the LGBT community.

Bob Mensel, the choir's artistic director, said the first act is much more dramatic.

"Harvey's life ended with an assassination, so it's a little darker," he said. "It's gripping and dark. We sing a song about the bullet that goes into his brain — the bullet knows what Harvey was thinking. Other parts are uplifting."

The second half of the program, Mensel said, is intended to be celebratory, resulting in a nice contrast.

Mensel, who has been with the chorus since 1993, said the group enjoys coming to Eastern Oregon.

"We've made some friends. It's fun to travel and we always love coming there," he said. "It's a nice drive and they make it a fun time for us."

Vickie Read, secretary of Pendleton PFLAG, is just as thrilled to have the group return to the area.

"This is a world class choir," she said. "To have them come to our small community is just an amazing opportunity for people."

In addition, Read said the chorus shares a beautiful story. Read is especially excited about the special soloist for the Harvey Milk part of the program.

Kansas transplant Dru



Photo contributed by Bill Barry

Dru Rutledge, 9-year-old Dylan Beckett and Portland Gay Men's Chorus tenor Brian Haimbach are featured soloists in "I Am Harvey Milk," a production that celebrates the life of California's first openly gay public official. The chorus will perform Saturday, April 11 at the Vert Auditorium in Pendleton as part of its Celebrate Oregon Tour.



Photo contributed by Bill Barry

The Portland Gay Men's Chorus will perform Saturday, April 11 at the Vert Auditorium in Pendleton as part of its Celebrate Oregon Tour. The event will serve as a fundraiser for the Pendleton chapter of PFLAG (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) group.

Rutledge has quickly won over Portland audiences with her spectacular soprano voice and stage presence. In this, her second appearance with the chorus, Rutledge performs the roles of Milk's mother and his teacher, Mrs. Rosenblatt.

Rutledge sings with the Portland Opera and has appeared in numerous musicals with Portland Center Stage, Lakewood Theatre and Broadway Rose. She also recently performed with the Oregon Symphony on the Distant Worlds Tour and in Miami with the New World Symphony.

"Her résumé is really impressive," Read said. "This is going to be amazing."

Also joining the chorus for "I Am Harvey Milk" is 9-year old Dylan Beckett and men's chorus tenor Brian Haimbach.

Prior to the performance, PFLAG will honor a trio of area businesses as PFLAG Equality Champions. Those being recognized include Great Pacific Wine & Coffee Co., Blue Mountain Community College and Pendleton House Bed & Breakfast. Also, the group will share about the Roberta Frasier Anderson Diversity

"We've made some friends. It's fun to travel and we always love coming there."

— Bob Mensel, Portland Gay Men's Chorus artistic director

Scholarship. Named after the 103-year-old Anderson, PFLAG will award its first scholarship this year to a Pendleton High School senior.

"We would love to have families, we'd love to have adolescents come — it's a family-friendly presentation," Read said. "PFLAG just wants people to come enjoy the program, it's such a treat."

For more information about PFLAG, contact Read at vickie_read@hotmail.com. For more about the chorus, visit www.pdxgmc.org.

Contact Community Editor Tammy Malgesini at tmalgesini@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4539

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