BRIEFLY

Summer reading program heats up

ATHENA — Things are sizzling with the Summer Reading Program at the Athena Public Library.

The library invites Super Heroes to gather Monday at 10 a.m. at 418 E. Main St., Athena. Bring your super cape or make one at the library.

Also, Thursday at 10 a.m., the SockRockerz, who rock in silly socks and maybe hero capes, are going to sing and dance while sharing about how to be heroes and stop bullying. Because it's been so hot, the SockRockerz are bringing their friend, Popz, the Pop Locking Polar Bear, who brings sweet moves and cool style.

Kids are encouraged to come for a rocking good time. Be sure to wear your hero cape if you have one, and come anyway if you don't.

For more information, call 541-566-2470 or search Facebook for the "Athena Public Library."

Genealogy group meets Tuesday

PENDLETON — The Blue Mountain Genealogy Society will meet Tuesday at 1 p.m. in the Community Room at the Pendleton Public Library, 502 S.W. Dorion Ave.

Those attending are encouraged to bring competed family group sheets.

For more information, contact vjcurtiss@yahoo.com.

Library program features crafts

PENDLETON — Children and youths are invited to drop in to the Pendleton Public Library for craft projects.

Crafternoons are each Tuesday at 4 p.m. at 502 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton. Some of the activities are group efforts, while some feature individual projects. Although geared for ages 3-12, the activities are open to all ages.

For more information, call 541-966-0380.

Community choir seeks singers

HERMISTON — Rehearsals for a community concert are underway, but it's not too late to warm up your vocal cords.

Joshua Rist, choir teacher at Hermiston High School, is organizing and directing the summer community choir. Although rehearsals began this week, additional participants, ages 14 and older, may register through Wednesday, July 8.

The Hermiston Summer Choir practices Tuesday and Thursdays from 7-9 p.m. in Room 109 at Hermiston High School, 600 S. First St. Coordinated by Hermiston Parks & Recreation, the cost is $10 for residents and $12 for non-residents.

The rehearsals will crescendo with a community performance Thursday, July 23 in the school's fine arts auditorium.

For more information, visit www.hermistonrecreation.com. To register, call 541-667-5018 or stop by the recreation office, 180 N.E. Second St., Hermiston.

Cooking class focuses on fresh produce

PENDLETON — The "Cooking Fresh" class is an opportunity to learn how to cook with fresh produce.

The once-a-month sessions are scheduled for July 14, Aug. 11, Sept. 8 and Oct. 13 at the Salvation Army in Pendleton from 2-3:30 p.m. WIC (Women Infants Children) is sponsoring the classes. Students will receive five dollar tokens for the Pendleton Farmers Market.

Space is limited. Call 541-966-3354 to sign up.

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

Beckman to close Main Street storefront

Saddlemaker to work from home's two-car garage

By JONATHAN BACH
East Oregonian

EO file photo

Saddlemaker Monte Beckman works on a saddle started at his shop in June, 2008, in Pendleton.

Last year, famed saddlemaker Monte Beckman fulfilled his dream of opening a shop at 241 S. Main St. in Pendleton. But he now plans to close the storefront this month and craft saddles from his home's two-car garage.

Beckman, 65, made the decision because he felt he needed to take a break from the pressures of running a business.

But quitting time for his craft may not come soon.

"I'm certainly not retiring," he said, "but I'm devoting whatever time I have left to saddles."

His journey with leather working has spanned the length of some 35 years, he said.

Out of the U.S. Air Force in 1974 and having studied up on saddle making with money from his G.I. Bill, he worked at Hamley's in the 1980s before setting out on his own, he said.

"I got to thinking if I was ever going to open my own shop, I'd better get to doing it," he said.

In 1994, he did. He remembers living alone in a house on First Street in Pendleton, converting its second floor into a saddle workshop.

Now, things are coming full circle.

The Beckman tradition of leather working may carry on into the future.

He said his proudest moment was watching his son, Isaac, 36, who works at Beckman Saddles, carve leather.

"Out of the five boys, I'm so thankful one of them chose to learn it," he said.

The younger Beckman said he hopes to continue the leather legacy, though he might not produce saddles.

"There's a whole lot that goes into making saddles," said Isaac of a process he said takes about a month.

Time aside, he loves to work with leather and has a mind to open a custom leather shop himself.

"I could do this for the rest of my life," he said.

Beckman Saddles will still be reachable at its current phone number, 541-278-3455.

Contact Jonathan Bach at jbach@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0809.

Staff photo by Jade McDowell

Vehicle fire in Hermiston

Hermiston firefighters use a hose to cool off a vehicle after it caught fire on Hickey Road Thursday morning. No one was injured but the vehicle was fully engulfed when crews arrived.

BOARDMAN

Man killed in motorcycle crash

East Oregonian

A Boardman man was killed in a motorcycle crash late Thursday night.

Oregon State Police reported William R. Brooks, 58, of Boardman was traveling westbound on Highway 730 when he crashed on the westbound Interstate 84 on-ramp.

According to a preliminary investigation by OSP it appears Brooks had already passed the on-ramp when he attempted to backtrack onto it by navigating his 2002 Harley Davidson across the median. His motorcycle struck a culvert and he was ejected. Brooks was discovered by a passing motorist who called 9-1-1 at about 11:20 p.m. He was pronounced dead at the scene by emergency responders.

OSP reports alcohol consumption is being investigated as a contributing factor.

The agency was assisted on scene by Boardman Fire and Ambulance, Morrow County Sheriff's Department and the Oregon Department of Transportation.

Crow's Shadow receives $165,000 grant

East Oregonian

According to a press release, the Crow's Shadow Institute of the Arts was recently awarded a $165,000 grant from the Meyer Memorial Trust.

The press release states the grant "will be used to hire a new-part time marketing/administrative assistant, install a new inventory database, hire and transition a new Master Printer, and expand current residency programming."

The assistant will be used to help launch the new Crow's Shadow website and expand the institute's social media presence.

In addition to upgrading technology, $15,000 is earmarked for technical assistance throughout the grant's three-year term.

Crow's Shadow is a Mission-based nonprofit founded in 1992 to provide artistic development opportunities to American Indians.

Programs include artist-in-residencies, traditional art workshops, printmaking workshops and youth education projects.

Firefighters tackle 19,000-acre fire in Central Oregon

DAYVILLE (AP) — Firefighters in central Oregon are fighting a large fire on the west side of the South Fork John Day River, about 11 miles south of Dayville.

The Oregon Department of Forestry said on Friday that the Corner Creek Fire grew by 7,000 acres overnight to about 19,000 acres and is zero percent contained. Some of the acreage gain was from burnout operations to control the fire.

Officials said conditions are extremely challenging: very high temperatures and low relative humidity coupled with winds gusting to 25 mph.

Fire information spokeswoman Mary Huels said six residences and a dozen other structures at several ranches could be threatened, but no structures have burned thus far.

A forest closure has been issued for a part of the Ochoco National Forest. Several roads and campgrounds are also closed.

SUBMIT COMMUNITY NEWS

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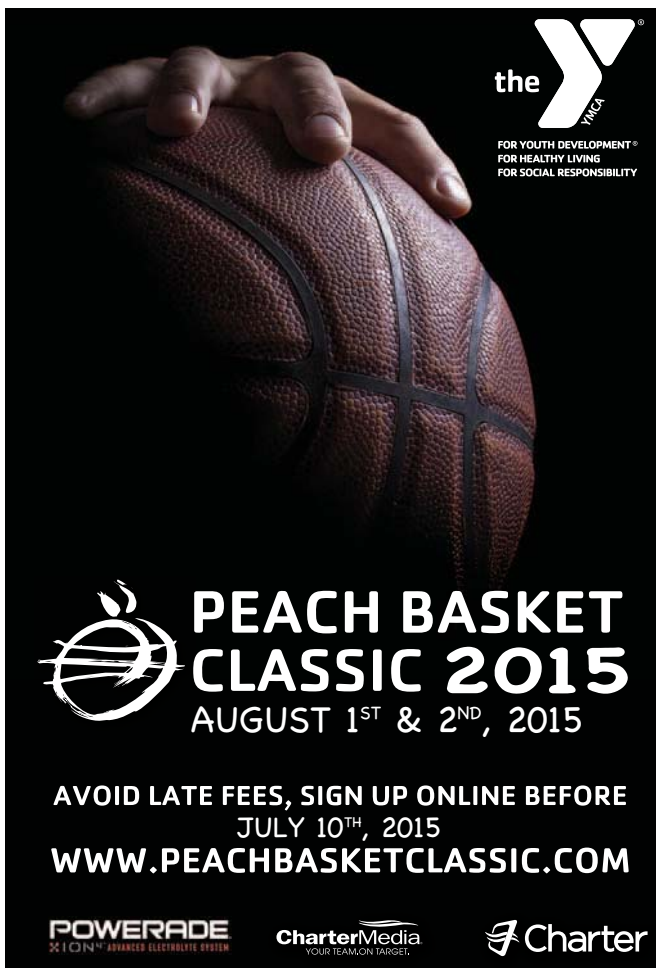
THANK YOU neighbors and multiple fire departments that came to the lightning fire south of Pendleton on Hoeft Road.

Special thanks to Derek Hoeft and Joe Talbot for the tractors & disks and PP&L crews for working all night to restore power!!
Thank you very much!
Larry, Becky, Heath, Heather & Blair Hoeft