HERMISTON

Woman recognized for years of quilt donations

Bonnie Engle, 85, and friends make more than 100 quilts a year

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

After helping provide a little extra warmth for hundreds of families in need, Bonnie Engle of Hermiston got a gift in return on Wednesday.

Hermiston Police Captain Travis Enyon presented her with a $250 gift certificate for her 85th birthday, recognizing the hundreds of handmade quilts she has had a hand in donating to the department's Christmas Express program over the years.

"This is a huge part of the Christmas Express package we do, and I can't tell you how helpful it's been," he said.

The Christmas Express distributes food, toys and other items to needy families during the holiday season. Engle said she started making quilts for the program about 12 years ago, and eventually got a handful of fellow residents at Desert Sage Manor to help tie the ones she made, and in some cases make their own. Together they donate between 100 and 120 handmade quilts each year.

Photo by Jade McDowell

Bonnie Engle stands with some of the quilts that she and other Desert Sage Manor residents have prepared to donate to the Christmas Express.

Community members often donate fabric for the quilts, but the women generally pay for batting and other supplies out of their own pockets.

Engle said she started making quilts after she retired "just for something to do," but now she loves being able to help out a worthy cause.

This year she said she made most of the fronts and then set them up on frames in the common area so other people could sit and help tie together the front and the back. Fellow Desert Sage Manor resident Geri Nunnenkamp said having the quilts to work on during the year had been helpful in keeping her mind off of the health issues she has been experiencing.

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>
> **— Travis Enyon,** Hermiston Police Captain

"It's fun," she said. "When you're in pain and you can't sleep you can sit and think of something else."

In addition to the quilts, the residents also help the Christmas Express program by collecting donations, crocheting items and buying toys and books to donate.

Darlene Nelson, property manager for Desert Sage Manor, pointed out that the apartments — which are available to women age 62 and older — are subsidized by the housing authority. She said many of the women there feel drawn toward doing something in recognition of the rent help they receive.

"This is a good way to give back to the community," she said.

Nelson said she wanted to challenge all of the rent-subsidized housing complexes in Hermiston to consider doing something once a year to help a nonprofit.

She said Engle has lived at Desert Sage Manor since a month after it opened in 1999 and has a big influence on the close-knit community of women there. She monitors the alert buttons that residents can push in case of a medical emergency, helps with tenant lockouts and other issues when Nelson isn't available, heads up the annual yard sale and holiday bazaar and makes breakfast for the tenants every Monday.

"She gives and gives and gives," Nelson said.

Engle is more modest about her endeavors, especially when it comes to the hours she spends each week making quilts for families in need.

"It's just something to do," she said.

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PENDLETON

Anarchist organizers coming to the arts center

Discussion panel on two-month tour through 25 states

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

Anarchy is coming to Pendleton — not literally — but in the form of a discussion panel.

The panel, which brings together anarchist organizers from Latin America, Eastern Europe, the Balkans and North America, will discuss modern anarchist ideas and tactics at the Pendleton Center for the Arts Oct. 7 at 7 p.m.

"The participants will compare experiences from the wave of protests and uprisings that has swept the world since 2010 — exploring the role of demand-based politics in both catalyzing and limiting movements, examining a variety of forms of repression, and critically evaluating experiments with direct democracy," a press release states. "They will conclude by assessing the prospects of contemporary struggles for self-determination in an era of globalized capitalism and state control."

The panel's 25-state, 50-stop, two-month tour will also promote "To Change Everything," an anarchist manifesto written by CrimethInc., a self-described "decentralized anarchist collective."

The local event is being organized by Chris Garrigues, a Pendleton resident and a math teacher at Pilot Rock Junior/Senior High School.

Originally from the East Coast, Garrigues became familiar with CrimethInc. when he worked at The Wooden Shoe, an anarchist book store in Philadelphia.

Garrigues kept in touch, and when he learned that the panel was going to tour the country and was looking for new venues and cities to host them, he formed a group called D'School Pendleton and volunteered to host one.

While the panel is mostly presents in major metro areas and college towns on its tours, Pendleton won't be the only unconventional stop.

In between stops like Portland, San Francisco and New Orleans, the tour will stop at Grass Valley, Calif., a city of roughly 12,000 between Sacramento and Reno, Nev., and Durango, a town of nearly 17,000 in southwestern Colorado.

Having grown up in a military town in Virginia, Garrigues understands that many Pendletonians might consider themselves law-and-order types.

But he's hopeful that panel attendees will come to the event with an open mind and be willing to challenge themselves. Garrigues said anarchy's philosophy of self-determination should appeal to both liberals and conservatives.

Although the panel will attempt to clarify anarchy, the panelists themselves are shrouded in mystery — Garrigues said he hasn't been told the identity of the panelists, a move he thinks might be a way for attendees to focus on the ideas instead of the individuals.

If the event is a success, Garrigues said he would like to use D'School Pendleton to host future educational events, although they'll probably be less provocative than anarchy.

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PILOT ROCK

Wastewater lagoon project will raise sewer rates

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

Pilot Rock City Council learned Tuesday it could not arbitrarily raise sewer rates to qualify for low-interest loans and grants to fund the city's new wastewater treatment facility. But it could justify the $10 rate hike that went into effect in July to help pay for the project.

The council last month voted to have the engineering firm Anderson Perry and Associates, Inc., draft plans for new wastewater lagoons. That project would cost about $4 million. Then at the Sept. 10 council meeting, Councilman Deacon Perkins questioned why the project was about $1.3 million more than other options. So Tuesday night Anderson Perry president Brad Baird and engineer Jadon Herron returned for another round of questions and answers.

They explained the council could opt for the $2.7 million evaporation system that would turn the city's bike pit — currently used for dirt bike events — into the lagoons, which is what the pit used to be. That estimate, though, does not include the cost of creating a new site for the bike pit.

The other option would reach $4 million because it would require building dikes for new lagoons. That "earth work," Baird said, is expensive. But this option also would mean less maintenance and environmental monitoring over the life of the lagoons.

It also would be enough for the city to warrant raising the sewer rate to at least $40.36 a month, the figure that would qualify the city for a 1 percent, long-term loan from government agencies to pay for the project. Baird said the project cost must drive the rate increase — the city simply raising the rates to get a deal would not pass muster.

That drew concern from council members because the city raised the sewer rate $10 to pay for the lagoon work and put the city on track to get that 1 percent loan. Baird said the city should be fine because it has not built up a large pile of money from the increase.

He also said the more expensive option may allow the city to reach a $46-a-month threshold that would qualify it for a $750,000 grant that would reduce the overall cost.

The $2.7 million option, though, may not get the rate over the threshold. If it doesn't hit that mark, the city would have to go with a loan at 4 percent interest.

Baird pushed the $4 million project, but he said either evaporation option would be better than irrigation, which would demand higher maintenance costs and be subject to more environmental regulations.

The city's current sewer rate is $28 per month.

The council consensus was to have Anderson Perry make drafts for both evaporation lagoon options. Then the city will take plans to a "one stop" meeting with state and federal agencies to consider the project and determine funding mechanisms.

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EAST OREGONIAN

GEORGE PLAVEN
Reporter

George has been reporting on natural resources and agriculture for the East Oregonian for two and a half years. He has also reported in Montana and Colorado.

George graduated from the University of Colorado at Boulder and lives in Pendleton. He plays trombone with local blues band Big Steve and the Train Wreck and enjoys spending weekends hiking and fishing in the Blue Mountains.

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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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