

Senate tips hat to Happy Canyon

East Oregonian

The Oregon Senate heaped praise Monday on the Happy Canyon Indian Pageant and Wild West Show in honor of its 100th anniversary.

Sen. Bill Hansell (R-Athens) introduced a resolution to congratulate the Pendleton mainstay on its centennial year, and princesses Appollonia Saenz and Elena Van Pelt opened the day's session by carrying the flags onto the Senate floor.

The resolution listed the show's accomplishments, including being the longest running outdoor wild west show in the U.S., enlisting 500 people, 50 animals and a live orchestra in the production, and attracting visitors from around the world to Pendleton.

In 2012 the event was named the state's official outdoor Indian pageant and wild west show by a resolution carried by Sen. David Nelson (R-Pendleton). Happy Canyon publicity director Corey Neistadt said Monday's recognition was a celebration.

"Happy Canyon is in some pretty esteemed company in the region and the state by hitting the 100



Happy Canyon Directors stand with Sen. Bill Hansell, R-Athens, as well as princesses Appollonia Saenz and Elena Van Pelt on the Oregon Senate floor.

year mark — the EO, the Woolen Mills, our sister organization the Pendleton Round-Up, Umatilla County Fair, and others," he wrote in an email. "To be recognized

for that type of longevity is amazing."

He said members of the board and all the volunteers feel like a family, and to be singled out at the state level

makes everyone involved "feel good inside."

The night show will officially celebrate 100 years during its performances Sept. 14-17.

Hermiston man cuts sex crimes plea deal, avoids rape charge

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

The Hermiston man who faced police in a standoff in Pendleton last fall is headed to prison for more than seven years.

Ricardo Amezcua, 27, made a deal Friday in Umatilla County Circuit Court, Pendleton, pleading guilty to four counts of second-degree sexual abuse and one of delivering a controlled substance to a minor. Court records show Circuit Judge Christopher Brauer sentenced Amezcua to seven years, two months in prison.

The state also dismissed 13 counts against Amezcua as part of the deal, including three of first-degree unlawful sexual penetration and four of first-degree rape.

Amezcua was headed to trial in early March. The Umatilla County District Attorney's Office alleged Amezcua raped, molested

and sexually abused one woman multiple times in a hotel room at Wildhorse Resort & Casino a few miles east of Pendleton on the Umatilla Indian Reservation, then threatened to

harm her or her family if she told anyone. The plea deal alleviates the state's burden of proving its case at trial and allows Amezcua to avoid the possibility of a much longer prison stay under Oregon's mandatory minimum sentencing law. First-degree rape, for example, carries a minimum sentence of eight years, four months.

Umatilla tribal police and federal agents arrested Amezcua at a North Hill home in Pendleton after a standoff in September. As of yet, according to court records, Amezcua does not face federal charges.

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Amezcua

WYDEN: Honored Youngman with a flag from the Capitol

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recognizing Clemons' resolve, she finally slipped the medal around her neck. Clemons went to his seat, while Youngman's eyes misted.

She had come to the town hall at Wyden's request so he could honor the popular teacher who is fighting cancer for the third time. Students started a Twitter campaign last month to get Youngman on the "Ellen DeGeneres Show" or at least in the audience. The teacher had expressed a desire to meet the comedienne partly because of her emphasis on being kind.

The #YoungmanOnEllen campaign trended and attracted thousands of tweets, including one from Wyden himself. Youngman had come to the town hall from St. Anthony Hospital where she had gone Sunday night with a low white blood cell count and a fever. Wyden presented Youngman with a flag that had flown over the Capitol. He instructed students take out their cellphones and record a huge group cheer so loud "they can hear it all the way on the Ellen Show."

"There are times in the life of a community when the power of one person's story captures the hearts of everybody who hears it," Wyden said. "Señora Youngman comes from a family with a rich, long history of service and she has continued that tradition with dedication to her students and her belief in kindness."

After the presentation, students queried the senator on a smörgåsbord of topics. Following are a sampling of Wyden responses.

On the takeover of the Malheur refuge: "We don't want people coming from the outside and chipping away at the rule of law and the bedrock principals that made our country what it is. That's not the way we do it. In a democracy, we have checks

and balances. People can't come in and make their own laws."

On the replacement of Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia:

"This discussion should be conducted with the dignity that this position warrants. It's an urgent matter ... Justice Kennedy, one of the swing voters, was confirmed in an election year."

On Bengazi: "We've already determined there was inadequate security there. All sides have recognized that. ... It is a very dangerous world out there. There are lots of people and particularly non-nation states who don't wish us well."

On barring Syrian refugees: "The idea that you don't take Muslims is a terrible idea — that's a repudiation of what our country stands for, which is you treat everybody equally. Obviously, you need a vigorous screening process for refugees."

On whether to increase humanitarian aid: "It is very clear if we're to deal with these serious threats that soft power, which is what humanitarian aid is, must play a bigger and more forcible role."

On mass shootings and gun rights: "Are we just going to shrug our shoulders and say that's the way it is? I don't think that's good enough. There are all kinds of things we can do without trampling on the Second Amendment."

On legalization of marijuana in Oregon: "This is not a matter of whether you're for it or against it. Oregonians have cast their votes. The question now becomes, 'Are we going to have (medical and recreational marijuana sellers) be magnets for crime because they're hauling cash around in wheelbarrows rather than letting them go through banking channels.'"

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Spanish language teacher Kathryn Youngman speaks during a town hall meeting with U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden on Monday at Pendleton High School.

YOUNGMAN: Don't know exactly when episode will air

Continued from 1A

showed students holding up cards with adjectives describing the Spanish teacher such as positive, passionate, faithful and courageous. Other clips featured groups from around the world holding #YoungmanOnEllen signs from Mexico to Kansas City, Australia to Butte, Montana. From Disneyland, Holland, Tokyo and Finland. The images showed students, soldiers, athletic teams, police officers, fraternity and sorority members, firefighters and employees at banks, a post office, stores, libraries and myriad others.

Youngman had come to school Monday morning from the St. Anthony Hospital, where she had gone Sunday night with a low white blood cell count and a fever. The teacher rolled into school in a wheelchair and wearing a mask. She first appeared at Sen. Ron Wyden's annual Umatilla County Town Hall then trekked over to the

gym for the assembly.

Junior Emily Griffin, who introduced Youngman, said she feels a kinship partly because of her own fragile health condition, which involved a liver transplant. She said her fellow students often deal with anxiety, depression and doubts about self-worth.

"She has taught us that no matter what you struggle with, whether it's health-related or not, to always have a positive attitude and always be kind," Griffin said.

The students gave Youngman a high-decibel welcome as she walked slowly to the microphone. She looked out at the teenagers and her colleagues, basking in the roar and looking amazed.

"I am overwhelmed beyond words," she said.

A family member said they don't know exactly when the show will air, but guess it could be Friday or Monday.

Contact Kathy Aney at kane@eastoregonian.com or call 541-966-0810.

Construction trailer destroyed in fire

BOARDMAN — Firefighters from Boardman and Irrigon responded to a fire Monday morning at a construction trailer outside a potato shed on Ullman Boulevard at the Port of Morrow.

No one was hurt, though the trailer was destroyed, according to the Boardman Rural Fire Protection District. The cause of the fire was not immediately known, but did not appear to be suspicious.

No one at the port could be reached Monday for comment.

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PENDLETON City council to consider at-large appointment

East Oregonian

If divided evenly, each of the five men seeking appointment to the Pendleton City Council's vacant at-large seat will get 12 minutes to make their case as to why he should finish out Jane Hill's term.

Barring a last-minute change, five applicants will be interviewed publicly Tuesday from 5 to 6 p.m.

The field includes James Tibbets, a self-employed computer repairman convicted of a hate crime, and Larry Anderson, the retired owner of Main Street Diner and the treasurer of the committee trying to recall councilor Al Plute.

Neither Tibbets or Anderson has filed for a full term, but the other three candidates have.

Appointment to the city council would make retiree Paul Rabbitt, J & B Automotive co-owner Jim Swearingen or Umatilla County Assessment and Taxation Director Paul Chalmers the nominal incumbent going into the May 17 contest.

The fourth candidate in the at-large council race, retired Wal-Mart Distribution Center employee Rick Rohde, did not submit his name for consideration in

the appointment.

Mayor Phillip Houk said the council will draw from a generalized list of seven questions to interview the potential appointees.

Following the interviews, the council will convene for its regular meeting at 7 p.m., where members will begin publicly deliberating the candidates.

If a candidate can garner at least five votes he will be appointed, immediately sworn in and join the council on the dais.

Appointment consideration will automatically continue to the next meeting if no candidate can attract five votes.

The length of time it takes for the council to make appointments varies.

Houk said the council sometimes chooses a new member in one meeting while other vacancies have taken months to fill.

The latest vacancy came about when Hill resigned in January to take a lobbying position with the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

The interviews and council meeting will be held Tuesday at the council chambers in city hall, 500 S.W. Dorion Avenue.

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