



HERMISTON HEADED TO STATE
5A GIRLS BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT/1B



WEEKEND EDITION
ANIMAL CENSUS
LIFESTYLES/1C



Smith takes Walla Walla job
REGION/3A

EAST OREGONIAN

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Homeless camp cleared out

Tammy Page and Phillip Martinez stand with their belongings on the side of Old River Road after the Umatilla County Sheriff's office evicted them from a section of riverbank where they had been living.

Staff photo by Jade McDowell



By **JADE MCDOWELL**
East Oregonian

Residents of an unofficial homeless camp on Old River Road were trespassed Friday morning from the property by the Umatilla County Sheriff's Office.

As county workers clad in neon orange vests pulled old cushions and broken buckets out of the bushes and threw them into an overflowing dumpster, some of the camp's residents

stood on the side of the road with their belongings pushed into a pile.

"We don't know where to go," Tammy Page said.

She and her boyfriend Phillip Martinez called that spot by the Umatilla River home for about five months, she estimated, after being evicted from their previous camping spot along the river behind Umatilla High School.

About two weeks ago, she said, some people who said they worked for the state came and

told them they needed to move to higher ground because the river was going to flood. That put them closer to the road, and their increased visibility generated complaints.

Page said people from the community had stopped by in recent weeks with food and blankets. But many people want the homeless "out of sight and out of mind."

"They don't know how to

See **HOMELESS/10A**



Photo contributed by Ryan Lehnert / staff photo by E.J. Harris

Pendleton Police Cpl. Ryan Lehnert knows firsthand the struggles that many combat veterans go through. Lehnert was a platoon sergeant with the Oregon National Guard and served a tour of duty in Iraq in 2004.

Combat zone is hard to leave behind

By **KATHY ANEY**
East Oregonian

Ryan Lehnert remembers the moment in 2004 when an artillery rocket shattered his sense of control.

Lehnert had arrived in Iraq a week earlier to lead a platoon of Oregon Army National Guard soldiers locating and destroying roadside bombs near Kirkuk. During those early days, Lehnert felt confident he and his 30 soldiers could thwart danger by simply doing their job. When a rocket landed near him as he walked back from chow one night, his perspective changed.

"I could hear the noise in the air and see the flash," he said. "I hit the ground. The rocket blew up about

Changing Minds

Mental Health in Eastern Oregon

100 yards from me. It was right then and there I thought, 'We are not in Kansas anymore. This is the real deal. This is war.'"

Before he stood back up, he shot a prayer to the man upstairs. It was a wake-up call, of sorts, a reminder of the impersonal nature and unpredictability of modern war. Someone a couple of thousand yards away can

launch a rocket and kill someone without ever seeing their face.

In the next year, Lehnert and his men would spend their days doing reconnaissance along the roads of northern Iraq, looking for anything out of place that could indicate the presence of explosives.

"You look for any irregularities — new dirt, green versus brown vegetation, a dead animal, old tires, a grain sack," he said.

One day, a soldier spotted a white wire sticking out from the seam between a curb and a sidewalk. Bomb technicians set a charge and blew it up. Occasionally, a bomb exploded undetected. In January, a soldier in the platoon lost his leg after

See **LEHNERT/10A**

EO Forum on Mental Health

• Tuesday, 7 p.m.
• Blue Mountain Community College, 2411 NW Carden, Pendleton
• Gordon Smith wrote "Remembering Garrett" about his son's battle with depression and suicide, and will lead a EO Forum discussion on mental health. Smith, a Pendleton native and two-term U.S. senator, is president and CEO of the National Association of Broadcasters and operated Smith Frozen Foods in Weston and now lives with his wife, Sharon, in Bethesda, Maryland.

PTSD through the century

By **KATHY ANEY**
East Oregonian

It seems each war has its own name for psychiatric trauma.

In the Civil War, soldiers suffered from soldier's heart. During World War I, it was shell shock. In World War II, it was called battle fatigue. Since Vietnam, we know it as post-traumatic stress disorder.

The meaning is the same. Soldiers come home haunted by the trauma they experienced. That likely has been the case since armies first faced each other on the battlefield.

See **PTSD/10A**

Relief from the refuge

Burns basketball teams experience success despite standoff stress

By **ANTONIO SIERRA**
East Oregonian

In some ways, 2016 Burns High School basketball wasn't that different from 2015.

Both the boys and girls teams played well in the Wapiti League and made a run in the OSAA 2A State Basketball Tournament in Pendleton.

But despite a continuum of basketball success, the 2016 teams had to deal with events that no Burns squad had dealt with before.

From Jan. 2 to Feb. 11, Burns was transformed from a quiet rural

community to the state's focal point as self-described militia members occupied the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in protest of the arrests of two local ranchers.

Despite the international attention, and the local tensions, coaches of both the boys and girls teams said it wasn't difficult to keep their players focused on the task at hand.

While the topic of the occupation came up occasionally, most of the players' attention was on practice and the upcoming game.

"(Basketball) was really just kind of a relief," forward Brett Friedrichson said.

Not that the teams weren't completely unaffected, especially given that the Harney County School District canceled a week of

See **BURNS/9A**



Shellie Tiller uncovers her eyes during tense moments of the 2A boys quarterfinal game between Burns and Vernonia on Thursday night at the Pendleton Convention Center. Tiller's son, Trace, plays for Burns.

Staff photo by Kathy Aney



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