



First-graders take a walk Thursday at McNary Dam.

Staff Photo by Jennifer Colton



Lynn Tompkins, of Blue Mountain Wildlife, holds up an owl pellet for kindergarteners to see during a presentation Thursday at McNary Dam.

Staff Photo by Jennifer Colton

Students embrace Earth Day at McNary Dam

By JENNIFER COLTON
East Oregonian

Children in tie-dyed T-shirts walked the trails below the McNary Dam on Thursday as Earth Day came to life for almost 700 students.

All classes from McNary Heights Elementary, clad in color-coded T-shirts, trekked down to the dam for a full day of hands-on experiments and exploring nature trails, all designed to give young students a fun and interesting way to look at the world around them.

Students from the advanced biology class at Umatilla High School led eight different stations scattered around the property, teaching younger students about everything from peacock plumage to pollution.

Elijah Pine and Ethan Holiday, for example, taught about snakes through puzzles, lessons, and the opportunity to pet Alfred, a boa constrictor.

"I was worried, but it's going pretty good so far," Pine said. "They (the younger students) thought it was awesome. I was really



Second-grader Kendra Chaves meets Alfred the snake Thursday at McNary Dam. More than 600 students participated in Earth Day activities at the McNary Dam.

Staff Photo by Jennifer Colton

impressed they enjoyed it as much as they did."

On the other side of the ponds, juniors Arely Ortiz and Yesenia Flores taught about pollution and recycling.

"It's a big topic in the world, and it's effecting everybody in their daily

lives," Ortiz said, adding it is important to introduce the topic to elementary students. "I hope that they understand that cleaning up after themselves is going to make a huge difference in our world. It may not seem like much with one person,

but if everyone does it, it will change everything."

Professional organizations, such as Blue Mountain Wildlife rehabilitation and education, also participated in the event, which was open to all students at McNary Heights Elementary.



Umatilla High School junior Elijah Pine introduces a class of second-graders to Alfred the snake Thursday at McNary Dam.

Staff Photo by Jennifer Colton



Umatilla High School junior Arely Ortiz helps students plant seeds in containers made from used water bottles Thursday at McNary Dam.

Staff Photo by Jennifer Colton

IRRIGON

Three cleared in investigation of teacher/student relationship

By JENNIFER COLTON
East Oregonian

The Oregon Teacher Standards and Practices Commission is still considering the fate of a local educator accused of a sexual relationship with a student, but recently dismissed the cases of three administrators that were part of the investigation.

A former student reported she had a sexual relationship with Jake McElligott, a former math teacher and coach at Irrigon High School, that began the day of her high school graduation in 2013. The student was an adult at the time, according to a Morrow County Sheriff's Office report. The sheriff's investigation was closed because there were no allegations of criminal conduct,

but the case was forwarded to the TSPC for investigation in September 2014.

Four individuals were confirmed under investigation in the case: McElligott; Dirk Dirksen, superintendent of the Morrow County School District; Craig Bensen, former Irrigon Junior/Senior High School principal; and Blaine Ganvoa, athletic director at Hermiston School District and former athletic director in Irrigon.

This month, the commission cleared the cases against Dirksen, Bensen and Ganvoa. TSPC officials stated they can release names of anyone cleared of charges. However, information on any educators still in the disciplinary process cannot be released until the process is complete. McElligott was not included in the list

released by TSPC of regional educators cleared.

The TSPC is a 17-member board of educators appointed by the governor and approved by the state legislature. The commission's mission is uphold professional standards for Oregon educators and is known for handling investigations of misconduct against teachers and administrators.

By law, every complaint against an educator filed with TSPC must be investigated, and complaints can come from almost anyone, including school districts, parents, law enforcement or community members. TSPC sees between 250 and 300 cases a year.

Contact Jennifer Colton at jcolton@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4534

BRIEFLY

80-year-old Chicago man dies in motorcycle crash

PENDLETON — Oregon State Police identified the motorcyclist who died Tuesday in a crash near Pendleton as Richard R. Hutchins, 80, of Chicago.

Troopers and emergency personnel Tuesday at about 3:30 p.m. responded to the report of a motorcycle crashing into a guardrail on Interstate 84 near milepost 219, according to a written statement from state police.

The preliminary investigation indicated the rider was traveling eastbound on Interstate 84, drifted out of the lane and struck a guardrail. State police, though, do not know why he crashed.

An air ambulance took Hutchins to Providence St. Mary Medical Center, Walla Walla, where he died from his injuries.

State police worked with the Walla Walla County coroner to identify the driver.

Umatilla County search and rescue finds lost hiker

PENDLETON — Members of the Umatilla County Sheriff's Office Search and Rescue Team found a lost hiker early Monday.

The team responded to call Sunday

around 9 p.m. for a hiker missing in "Pike's Peak" area, just south of the Washington border and east of Milton-Freewater, according to a written statement from the sheriff's office.

A couple from Walla Walla was hiking in the area when they separated near nightfall. The woman returned to their vehicle while her 63-year-old husband did not. She called his employer, who alerted the Umatilla County communications center.

Dispatch located a signal from the man's cellphone, the sheriff's office reported, and search and rescue members Travis Lundquist and Josh English responded to the area.

They hiked up a steep slope in the dark, according to the sheriff's office, and around 2:40 a.m. Monday found the lost man.

He was in shorts and sweatshirt and was uninjured. They escorted him back to his wife and vehicle.

"Both the hiker and his wife were very appreciative," the sheriff's office reported.

The mostly volunteer search and rescue team helps find lost and missing people, overdue hunters, stranded motorist and others, according to the statement. The team also provides aid in medical emergencies and even assists sheriff's deputies and other law enforcement agencies at major crime scenes.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

SATURDAY, APRIL 23

MEN'S BREAKFAST, 8 a.m., Bethel Assembly of God Church, 1109 Airport Road, Pendleton.

RETIREE UMATILLA ARMY DEPOT WOMEN'S CLUB, 9 a.m. no-host breakfast, Pheasant Cafe, 149 E. Main St., Hermiston.

UMATILLA COUNTY POMONA GRANGE, 12:30 p.m. lunch with meeting to follow, Columbia Grange Hall, Diagonal Road, Hermiston.

PENDLETON EAGLES STEAK AND LIVE MUSIC, 6-8 p.m. dinner, music 8 p.m. to midnight, Pendleton Eagles Lodge #28, 428 S. Main St., Pendleton. Open to members and guests. (541-278-2828).

SUNDAY, APRIL 24

HERMISTON EAGLES BREAKFAST, 8-11 a.m., 160 N.W. Second St. Members and guests welcome.

PENDLETON EAGLES BREAKFAST, 9 a.m. to noon, Pendleton Eagles Lodge #28, 428 S. Main St., Pendleton. Open to members and guests. (541-278-2828).

UNION PACIFIC EMPLOYEES CLUB, 1:30 p.m., Hermiston VFW Hall, 45 W. Cherry Ave., Hermiston. All UP employees, working or retired, are invited to attend. Bring a main dish or dessert and table service. (541-567-5260).

MONDAY, APRIL 25

NATIONAL ACTIVE AND RETIRED FEDERAL EMPLOYEES OF HERMISTON, 12 noon no-host lunch, Desert Lanes Bowling Alley. All federal employees, retirees and their spouses are welcome.

IRRIGON MOOSE LODGE TACOS AND BINGO, 6-9 p.m. tacos; 6:30-9 p.m. bingo. Bingo open to the public, 220 N.E. Third St. (541-922-1802 from noon-8 p.m.)

WESTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, 6 p.m., Memorial Hall, 210 E. Main St. **V.F.W. POST NO. 922 SOCIAL**, 6:30 p.m., VFW Hall, 1221 S.E. Court Place, Pendleton.

Tonya's House Annual Flower Sale

Friday, April 22nd, from 5-7pm and Saturday, April 23rd, 8-11am in front of the Pendleton Walmart.

Beautiful potted arrangements make a lovely Mother's Day gift, or spruce up your summer space!

Your choice of a 10" diameter hanging planter or 11x7" cedar toolbox-style planter, filled with a variety of colorful summer blooms, for \$17 each.

You can also call in your order to Tonya's House, Pendleton, OR, 541-276-2900. Orders will be ready for pick up at Tonya's House on May 6th. Home delivery available in Pendleton for an extra \$3.

All purchases enter buyer in a drawing for a Wildhorse Cineplex family movie night package!

ALL PROCEEDS GO TO FUNDING A SUMMER CAMP EXPERIENCE FOR TONYA'S HOUSE RESIDENTS

Thank you so much for your support!

Mother's Day!

May 8th

Let your mother know how much she is appreciated & loved!

Publishes in the Hermiston Herald May 4th
Publishes in the East Oregonian May 7th

SAMPLE

Happy Mother's Day
For a very special mother!
Your Name



Turn in a photo & short message for your mom.
Runs in EO & the HH for only \$25 per spot

Contact: Stephanie Newsom
541-278-2687 • snewsom@eastoregonian.com

Your Name: _____
Phone Number: _____
Mother's Name: _____
Message: _____

Send in, or drop by your photo and information to:
211 SE Byers, Pendleton, OR 97801
333 E. Main, Hermiston, OR 97838
or email snewsom@eastoregonian.com

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