

BOOKS: Thankful for all her loyal customers

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watched her pennies closely.

“I never even printed business cards,” she said. “That’s how I stayed in business so long — I never spent any more money than I had to.”

Dallas talks matter-of-factly of this heartbreaking final chapter of Armchair’s 34-year run. She stresses her immense gratitude to faithful patrons.

“We have a lot of loyal customers that supported us over the years and I am thankful,” she said. “There just aren’t enough of them.”

She broke away to wait on one of these customers, a woman holding two books she had found on the mostly bare shelves. On the wall near the woman’s right shoulder was a postcard with the likeness of octogenarian author Clyde Rice in a Scrooge-esque night shirt.

“Take an author to bed,” the card reads.

Dallas punched in the prices of the two book into the cash register, then calculated the 30 percent discount.

“That’s \$38.25,” Dallas told her.

“I’m really going to miss your store,” the woman said.

It’s a common lament.

“I’m so sad about her leaving,” said customer Ron Port, inclining his head at Dallas. “I like walking around in the local bookstore where you can pick up the books and look at them. You can’t walk around the computer and pick up books. At Amazon, you are at the mercy of the reviewers.”

Former Armchair owner Darcy Dauble is sorry the store is closing, too, but understands.

“You don’t have the volume to get discounts or make any sort of profit — it’s hard,” Dauble said. “People appreciate bookstores, I think, but books are expensive. It’s hard to buy local just to support your little bookstore.”

Despite the closure of her business, Dallas won’t concede that small, independent book sellers are going the way of the blacksmith. She said some readers who switched to Kindles or Nooks are



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

The long-time Pendleton bookstore Armchair Books is shuttering its doors.

now coming back because they missed the feel of physical books.

Indeed, the decline of brick-and-mortar bookstores seems to be easing off. Publishing consultant Mike Shatzkin told *USA Today* in 2011 that shelf space devoted to print books in physical stores would shrink 50 percent in five years. This week, in an email to the *East Oregonian*, he admitted he had miscalculated and it is more like a 35 percent drop.

“There does seem to be more persistence to print than I had thought there would be,” he said. “That reduces the decline path for stores. But the trends that drive people to online retail have not completely abated.”

Albert Greco, a Fordham University marketing professor who was quoted in that same *USA Today* story, said more independent bookstores started up than went out of business last year. In 2007, he said, bookstores had sales of about \$17.1 billion, which fell to about \$10.8 billion in 2014. In 2015, however, sales took a U-turn to \$11.1 billion.

“They have bounced back,” Greco said. “We saw gigantic interest in e-books ... people said e-books would

own half the market by 2015. That’s not the case at all.”

He shared recently released Association of American Publisher numbers that suggest e-book sales declined 9.5 percent from 2014 to 2015.

When asked if she’d ever get an e-book, Dallas shook her head, but allowed an escape clause.

“Maybe when my eyesight gets bad so I can enlarge the print,” she said.

On Saturday, the soon-to-be former bookstore owner will go out with a celebration. She invites former customers to drop in to the store from 2-4 p.m. to have cake and champagne, reminisce and say good-bye.

Now that she isn’t running a business, she will attend to her garden and go out into nature in search of wildflowers and mushrooms. She’ll tackle the boxes of books at her home. Her taste runs wide from Willa Cather and Ivan Doig to Harry Potter’s J.K. Rowling.

Dallas smiled at the silver lining of Armchair’s closing.

“I’ll have time to read,” she said.

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WOMEN: Pendleton was one of 12 tour stops

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and 18 percent had answered, “Somewhat.” The rest hadn’t needed child care.

Other real-time polling revealed 92 percent experienced discrimination based on gender and 66 percent faced mental health issues that adversely affected work, family, physical health or relationships. More than 70 percent revealed they feel stress every day because there isn’t enough time to get things done. Seventy-four percent of the group, or women close to them, had experienced sexual or domestic violence.

They texted their ages, race and county of residence. No need to share their sex — there was only one man in the room and he was there in case someone needed an interpreter.

The texting poll was part of the foundation’s state-wide “Listen to Her” tour. Evans also asked the group members to place dots on a large piece of butcher paper where someone had written 10 issues that affect women. Participants placed dots on the ones that challenge them personally. The topics included poverty and basic



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Participants at the “Listen to Her” town hall Wednesday evening at Blue Mountain Community College, Pendleton, discuss root causes and solutions to issues that affect women and girls.

needs, education, reproductive health and time pressure.

Participants divided up into smaller groups and discussed root causes and solutions to issues they were most passionate about.

Some women ventured out to the 1985 motor home Evans and her team uses for traveling and told stories on camera.

Before the hour-and-a-half session got rolling, Evans got the group dancing and laughing to a Michael Jackson tune. Then she got serious.

Data and stories gathered from around the state will inform a comprehensive study on women and girls. During

the past seven months, Evans said, the foundation collected and compiled “mountains of data.” The last such study was in 1998 using 1990 census numbers, she said.

“The decision makers in the state have been operating in an information blind for over 20 years,” Evans said. “That’s unacceptable for the 2.1 million women and girls of Oregon who contribute an extraordinary amount to our state. In return, they are experiencing some of the greatest inequities in the country.”

She’s referring to things like wage inequity, sexual assault and educational attainment. During the statewide tour, Evans and her team also

will gather personal stories.

“The stories matter, too,” Evans said. “We have heard from over 800 women so far.”

Pendleton was one of 12 stops on the tour, which finishes in Burns on May 2. The statewide report will be released in September.

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TAXI: City hasn’t heard of any Uber drivers in Hermiston

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sit’s contract for the senior and disabled ride program. The program allows senior and disabled residents to purchase one-way ride tickets for \$2 apiece, which cab companies can redeem at city hall for \$6.15.

City staff at the time said Hermiston Transit broke the contract by giving a client a ride in a vehicle without proper insurance, while the cab company’s staff contended the ride was a personal favor and no ticket changed hands.

Morgan said after that incident, Hermiston Transit continued to offer long-time senior and disabled clients a \$2 ride on its own dime, which caused a “significant” drop in the amount of money the city was spending to subsidize the senior and disabled ride program, still running through Umatilla Cab Company.

Taxi companies in larger

cities are increasingly seeing competition from ride-sharing companies such as Uber, which uses an app to connect people needing rides with nearby drivers willing to use their own car to pick someone up in exchange for payment.

Morgan said the city hasn’t heard of anyone acting as an Uber driver in the city, but if they did they would either need to get a license from the city as their own cab company or Uber would need to obtain a license with the city. Either way, qualifying for a city taxi license requires a guarantee of being available to give rides at least 18 hours each day.

“I don’t think (the licensing rules) would preclude them from driving,” he said, “but I think in practice it wouldn’t work out.”

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Racist statements lead lawmakers to reject proposed John Wayne Day

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — California lawmakers have defeated a resolution intended to honor John Wayne after opponents challenged what they say are racist statements by the late actor.

Republican State Assemblyman Matthew Harper of Huntington Beach sought to declare May 26, 2016, as John Wayne Day to mark the day the actor was born.

An Orange County airport is already named after him. The bill, ACR137, is the sort of resolution that lawmakers frequently pass.

But this one triggered a 20-minute debate Thursday before failing, 35-20, to what Harper called “the orthodoxy of political correctness.”

Others lined up to denounce what Demo-

cratic Assemblyman Luis Alejo of Watsonville called Wayne’s disturbing views on race.

In a 1971 interview with *Playboy*, Wayne talked about his qualms over the idea of ending white supremacy.

“We can’t all of a sudden get down on our knees and turn everything over to the leadership of the blacks. I believe in white supremacy until the blacks are educated to a point of responsibility. I don’t believe in giving authority and positions of leadership and judgment to irresponsible people,” he told the magazine.

Several Republicans say Wayne is remembered worldwide as an American hero. They argued that lawmakers have honored others despite controversies that eventually clouded their legacies.

AGRICULTURE: HAREC is already home to 15 center-pivot watering systems

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Center, which broke ground Thursday.

The project is just one part of a \$23 million bond that voters passed last year. BMCC also plans to start building a new Workforce Training Center in Boardman next month, and renovate its Facility for Agricultural Resource Management, or FARM, in Pendleton.

BMCC has partnered with Oregon State University on the Precision Irrigated Agriculture Center, which will be located on the campus of OSU’s Hermiston Agricultural Research and Extension Center. Staff scientists at HAREC already work extensively on precision irrigation, helping farmers conserve water and fertilizer while maximizing yield.

BMCC President Cam Preus said it makes sense to have students learn precision irrigation at a facility where they have easy access to hands-on training. HAREC is already home to 15 center-pivot watering systems, most of which were donated by local farmers who directly

benefit from the station’s research.

Preus said the agriculture industry is looking for employees with high-tech savvy, who understand the tools of the trade. BMCC graduates will be ready to fill that demand.

“There isn’t another facility like this,” Preus said. “We have demand from the farms, and we also have a lot of international interest in this program.”

Fred Ziari, president and CEO of IRZ Consulting in Hermiston, attended Thursday’s groundbreaking and said he is excited to see the center taking shape. Ziari’s company pioneers state-of-the-art technology for making irrigation more efficient, which has helped conserve an estimated 10 billion gallons of water per year, and 35 million kilowatt-hours of electricity.

In the past six months alone, Ziari said he’s hired 10 new irrigation engineers and technicians. Those local jobs could be filled by a new wave of local candidates.

“The demand is there. We look forward to hiring them

and contributing to their success,” Ziari said.

Phil Hamm, HAREC station director, said the partnership with BMCC will also provide them with more students and interest in conducting research experiments.

“Everyone knows agriculture is the ruler of our economy,” Hamm said. “We’re looking forward to building this cooperation and collaboration into the future.”

Construction on the Precision Irrigated Agriculture Center should wrap up by early 2017. Ziari, who described Hermiston as “the center of precision agriculture locally,” said he expects the facility will put both BMCC and OSU on the map.

“Every year, we have people from Brazil, Australia, Russia, the Middle East ... they all come here,” Ziari said. “Having a center that focuses on precision irrigation is unique in a global sense, and a national sense.”

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