

**RUSSIAN  
TRACK TEAM  
BANNED FROM  
RIO OLYMPICS**  
SPORTS/1B



**ADVENTURE AT WALLOWA LAKE**  
LIFESTYLES/1C



**PACIFIC AG ACQUIRES CALAGRI**  
REGION/3A

# EAST OREGONIAN

JUNE 18-19, 2016

140th Year, No. 176

WINNER OF THE 2015 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

\$1.50



Photo contributed by Allicia Stapleton

In this undated contributed photo, Abby Smart poses with her son Dominic.

**MILTON-FREEWATER**

## Teen father charged with murder of infant son

By PHIL WRIGHT  
East Oregonian

Abby Smart, 17, was still wearing her McDonald's uniform as she cried over the body of her infant boy in a hospital room.

Abby's sister, Allicia Stapleton, said she arrived minutes later to the emergency department at Providence St. Mary Medical Center, Walla Walla, and heard Abby wailing. Stapleton said she found her sister alone and clutching her

5-month-old baby, Dominic. He was in a little white blanket and was dead.

Stapleton, 28, said is speaking for her sister because talking about the death of her son was too hard for her. Abby was a good mother, even for someone so young, she said, and the boy was the center of her life.

"She's broken," Stapleton said. "Everybody's kind of just broken."

The boy's father, Evan Freel, 16, of Milton-Freewater, now

faces charges of murder by abuse and first-degree criminal mistreatment for the baby's death.

A Umatilla County grand jury on Wednesday indicted Freel, and the Umatilla County District Attorney's Office arraigned the teen Friday morning in circuit court in Pendleton. The state accuses Freel of inflicting deadly physical injury to the baby.

Freel appeared via video from the juvenile jail at the Northern Oregon Regional Correctional

Facilities, The Dalles. His court-appointed attorney, Herman Bylenga of Pendleton, entered pleas of not guilty for his client.

Circuit Judge Christopher Brauer set Freel's bail at \$5 million and set July 8 at 9:30 a.m. for a bail hearing.

No one from Freel's family was in the Pendleton courtroom. Barbara Freel, Evan Freel's grandmother and legal guardian,

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**PENDLETON**

## Fire dept. ignites talk with station options

By ANTONIO SIERRA  
East Oregonian

On Friday, Fire Chief Mike Ciraulo began the long process of selling the public on a new fire station.

About six people attended the first in a series of meetings at Pendleton Fire Station No. 1, with Ciraulo presenting some of the potential sites for a new fire station and why the current location and building are inadequate.

To elaborate on the latter point, Ciraulo dispatched staff members to give attendees a tour of the fire station.

Alex Baty showed off the station's decontamination room, which ironically also holds the facility's bio-hazard waste bins.

Jeff Perry went up to the workout room, which Ciraulo said he is on the verge of closing because of carcinogenic exposure. Perry said the gym's proximity to the vehicle bay means occupants are directly exposed to exhaust from fire trucks, as is a firefighting student who uses the room's couch as his sleeping quarters.

With the department growing to accommodate the rising

See STATION/10A



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Anita "Cele" Westlake and Donna Henderson embrace as they meet each other for the first time Friday at a family gathering in Pilot Rock. Westlake, raised by adoptive parents, also met her brother Ed Johns with whom she connected after they both took DNA tests through the Ancestry.com website.

## Finally family

## Siblings meet for first time in their sixties

Parents gave eight children up for adoption

By KATHY ANEY  
East Oregonian

Anita "Cele" Westlake is happily climbing her family tree for the first time.

Westlake fantasized about her biological family for most of her 66 years. Adopted by a Washington couple, Westlake grew up in a

happy home, but always wondered about her roots.

She's wondering no more.

The Orcas Island woman recently traveled to Pilot Rock to meet two biological siblings and dozens of cousins, aunts, uncles and other family members who she hadn't known existed until a few months ago.

Late last year, Westlake read an article about a woman who found her birth parents.

"The article gave instructions about how to obtain an original birth certificate," she said.

In February, she applied and received a birth certificate that gave her parents' names as Verna Etta Russell Fry and Robert Clair Fry. The space for the baby's name was blank.

Armed with her parents' names, Westlake searched Ancestry.com for connections and found postings from Donna DeGraw, of Pendleton, who listed Verna and Robert on her family tree. Westlake and DeGraw exchanged a flurry of messages and finally DeGraw wrote, "We are cousins." The news sent Westlake spinning.

See SIBLINGS/8A



Contributed photo by Francesca Gossler  
Francesca Gossler poses with her children, Jonathan and Monica Smith, outside of the Portland courtroom where she took the oath of United States citizenship Thursday.

**HERMISTON**

## Brand new U.S. citizen details immigration process

By JADE MCDOWELL  
East Oregonian

In the political battlefield of illegal immigration, one set of voices that often gets lost is those who immigrated to the United States legally from start to finish.

One of those voices belongs to Francesca Gossler, a Mexican-born U.S. citizen living in Hermiston. She said after years of fighting her way through the immigration process it is hard when people assume she is undocumented.

"Some of us worked hard to be here,"

"I never, ever thought I would live in the United States."

— Francesca Gossler, a Mexican-born U.S. citizen living in Hermiston

she said. "It's frustrating because they categorize you."

Gossler traveled to Portland on Thursday to be sworn in as a citizen. Hers is just one path of many to citizenship, she said, so she is only telling her

See CITIZEN/10A

