

Men's Chorus goes on the road

Make no mistake, the Pendleton Men's Chorus is the most well-dressed group of performers Eastern Oregon has ever seen.

Adorned in tuxedo jackets, cummerbunds and bow ties, they draw in the audience's attention when they perform and turns heads when hitting the town post-concert. Such concert attire reeks of professionalism — attention to appearance shows that they mean business.

Last weekend, for the first time in the group's eight-year history, they took their act on the road to perform at a Newport Performing Arts Center fundraiser, bringing their fashion sense with them.

Men's Chorus director Bill Mayclin said taking the group of 50 members out of town was a longstanding ambition.

"I always thought it would be kinda fun. In the back of my head, I never really knew if it would work but suddenly things started happening."

An invitation from Mayclin's friend Mark McConnell, former mayor of Newport and member of the Oregon Coast Council for the Arts (the nonprofit that manages the Performing Arts Center), spurred Mayclin into action.

"Some friends of mine came to Pendleton to hear our concert a couple of years ago. They always heard me talk about it. They're some of my best friends. They really enjoyed us. Mark said, 'You know, maybe you guys should come to Newport and sing.'"

The origins of the group can be traced to 2007, and a Community College Theater production of the musical 1776. The cast consisted of 22 male singers under the direction of Dave Miller, then the vocal instructor at Blue Mountain Community College. Miller moved out of the area during the last three weeks of rehearsals so Mayclin, a retired Pendleton High School choir instructor, was a natural choice to direct the group. The men enjoyed each other's company so much that they opted to continue their musical relationship.

For Mayclin, the prospect of leading a men's chorus was always a dream.

"I've always loved men's chorus music," says Mayclin. "It's a different sound. There's all this great music written for men and men's choruses sort of fell off the radar, it seems, and now they've really come back. Way back in the day men's glee clubs were really huge."

A striking feature of the group is how diverse they are. They range in age from 16 to 80. Some participants are music professionals or music educators while some had never sung prior to joining the chorus. And though most members are from Pendleton, some singers commute from Hermiston, Adams and Heppner to participate. Mayclin recalls chorus member Randy Thomas saying there was no other



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Andy Cary sings a solo Saturday during a Pendleton Men's Chorus performance at the Newport Performing Arts Center. The concert marked the first time the choir has traveled outside Umatilla County in its eight years of existence. The 40 singers, directed by Bill Mayclin, sang an eclectic program that ranged from J.S. Bach to a Gregorian chant, a Zulu piece and a song from "The Lion King."

reason that this particular group of men would ever get together except to sing because they are so varied in their life focus.

Mayclin maintains a "come as you are" mentality when it comes to the chorus. If one were to pin a mission statement on the group it would be "to provide an opportunity for guys to sing and have a good time doing it," said Mayclin. There are no auditions for the group.

It should also be noted that there are a few honorary men in the group: Sue Nelson, their longtime accompanist, and Emily Muller-Callendar, sitting in on fiddle this season.

When it comes to the selection of the Men's Chorus' performance material, just like its membership it is all over the map. Pieces performed encompass American folk music, European folk music, African spirituals, gospel, Broadway show tunes, contemporary pop songs, classical works, Gregorian chants, and more. Mayclin attributes this broad interest in genres to his

tenure at Pendleton High School where "you had to find things that everybody could relate to in some way."

There have been previous incarnations of men's choirs in Pendleton, which have all folded at some point. Mayclin is optimistic, but unsure of the future direction of the Men's Chorus. Mayclin knows he would like it "to continue growing ... to have somebody as a director help me ... maybe there will be another opportunity to go somewhere out of town in the future. (We're) always looking for new things to do."

Whatever happens, they are sure to be a brotherhood of sharp dressed men.

James Dean Kindle is a member of the Pendleton's Men's Chorus, the executive director of the Oregon East Symphony, a Pendleton musician and an entertainment columnist for the East Oregonian, whose work appears every other Saturday on the Entertainment page. Contact him at jamesdeankindle@gmail.com.

PENDLETON

Police zap man during drunk driving arrest

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

and bracing his legs to stay put.

Pendleton police early Saturday used a stun gun and some muscle to take down a driver that refused to get out of his pickup.

Kevin J. Gray, 47, of Hermiston, ended up in jail for driving under the influence of intoxicants and resisting arrest.

Pendleton Police Chief Stuart Roberts reported an officer around 1:30 a.m. Saturday saw the vehicle without headlights heading south on Main Street. The driver committed other traffic violations before the officer was able to stop him on Southwest Emigrant Avenue.

The officer contacted Gray, who Roberts said would only roll his window down far enough to pass documents through then roll it back up.

"The driver had trouble producing requested documents, showed additional signs of impairment and admitted to alcohol consumption," according to Roberts.

The officer asked Gray to step from the vehicle to perform field sobriety tests, but Gray refused. The officer gave Gray a warning about the refusal, Roberts reported, but Gray still would not budge.

Roberts said the cop told Gray he was under arrest and opened the door, and Gray tried to close it before grasping the steering wheel

Two officers tried to remove Gray, Roberts stated, while telling him over and over he was under arrest. Gray would not give up.

Roberts said police then warned Gray "ongoing resistance would result in his being tased" with a stun gun. Gray "continued to challenge officers' authority to arrest him," Roberts said.

An officer then shot Gray with the electronic gun, but one of the probes did not hit, Roberts stated, "rendering the Taser ineffective."

Officers then used the Taser in "drive stun" capacity, Roberts said, in which police hold the business end of the device against someone without firing the probes. That caused Gray to move enough for one officer to pull him from the pickup.

"As soon as the driver hit the ground, he immediately attempted to get to his feet," Roberts stated.

An officer forced him back to the ground in a sprawling manner, causing a cut over one of Gray's eyes. The two officers were able to eventually secure the driver in handcuffs.

Pendleton medics treated Gray at the scene, and he refused an ambulance ride to the hospital, according to police records. Officers then booked Gray into the Umatilla County Jail, Pendleton.

HERMISTON

Franklin set to retire after 11 years with BMCC

By ALEXA LOUGEE
East Oregonian

Harvey Franklin has been with Blue Mountain Community College for the last 11 years, but his experience in education spans a lifetime.

"Education is the key to life," he said.

Come July 1, Franklin will be studying a new subject: retirement.

Harvey is retiring from his position as Senior Associate Vice President of Branch Campuses, a role Jacelyn Keys will be assuming along with the new title of Hermiston BMCC Director.

Franklin won't be completely out of the education scene. He's hoping to use his knowledge and experience for consulting work. He's particularly interested in sharing his grant writing skills — it was these skills that brought new programs to BMCC, including the diesel technology degree.

Franklin began his career in education at Prairie City in 1975 teaching industrial arts. He earned his doctorate in education from the University of Oregon. He and his wife of 46 years,

Gwyneth, live on 80 acres outside of Hermiston where they raise cattle and alfalfa. Franklin hopes to keep ranching through retirement and get back into horses. Horseshoeing was one way he supported his family, including six kids, during summer months.

Franklin is a U.S. Army combat veteran, having served in the Vietnam war from 1967 to 1969. He used his GI Bill to pay for school and encourages all vets to utilize their benefits.

The "tremendous" support received by the community has impressed Franklin. He sees continued growth for BMCC and Hermiston, "There's just an overall good attitude of progression and wanting to grow," he said.



Franklin

BRIEFLY

Fire ban in effect on local wildlife refuges

PENDLETON — The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service imposed a complete ban on activities likely to start a fire on Mid-Columbia River national wildlife refuges.

The federal agency in an announcement Monday stated the ban includes the wildlife refuges of McKay Creek, McNary and Umatilla. The order prohibits the use of charcoal briquettes and cooking stoves, smoking outside of an enclosed vehicle and operation of any motor without an approved and working spark arrester.

The Wildlife Service also bans fireworks, which is in effect year-round.

Fish and Wildlife fire management officer Paul Hiebert in the written statement said the wet winter and spring resulted in significant vegetation growth, and the high temperatures with low humidity make conditions "perfect for the development of devastating wildfires."

And the upcoming

holiday weekend adds a concern of people starting fire on or near refuges. Vehicles catching fire or vehicles pulling over on roadways start the majority of large fires on refuge lands, according to the statement.

While there have not been major fires on local refuges, there have been several smaller fires, the statement said, including two this past weekend, and fire season in the West is shaping up to be severe.

Hermiston woman life-flighted after hit by SUV

HERMISTON — A Hermiston woman was taken by ambulance to Good Shepherd Medical Center Tuesday afternoon and then flown to a regional hospital after she was struck by a large SUV in her driveway.

According to Hermiston Police Chief Jason Edmiston, the woman sustained multiple fractures but is expected to recover.

According to Martin Neyman, 83, he and his

wife, Marianne, were preparing to hitch their trailer to their SUV outside their home on S.E. 7th Street. His wife had gotten out of the vehicle to guide him toward the hitch. He began backing up and next thing he knew, he said, there was a "bump, bump." He got out of the vehicle and found his wife on the ground.

Neighbor Maria Rodriguez called 9-1-1 after she saw the bleeding woman lying on the ground outside. Ambulance crews put the woman on a stretcher and took her to the hospital. Officers remained on scene investigating the incident, but Hermiston Police is currently classifying it as an accident.

Hermiston area boasts 2nd lottery winner in a week

STANFIELD — Just days after a Hermiston man won a sizable Oregon Lottery prize, another man from west Umatilla County hit the jackpot.

Walt Hinz won a

\$100,000 prize from Oregon Lottery's newly introduced Wheel of Fortune Scratch-it on Monday. Hinz purchased the \$10 ticket from Stanfield's Main Street Market, about five miles south of Hermiston, with money from previous Oregon Lottery winnings, according to a company news release.

Hinz won the first of two Wheel of Fortune Scratch-it \$100,000 prizes.

Hinz said he will put his winnings toward home improvements and celebrating his 18th wedding anniversary with his wife, Nancy.

Larry Stormont won the previous local prize, taking in \$50,000 from Oregon Lottery's 2nd Chance Drawing after reentering his non-winning Scratch-it. Stormont, who purchased the Scratch-it from Eastside Market in Hermiston, became the store's third big winner in as many months.

Briefs are compiled from staff and wire reports, and press releases. Email press releases to news@eastoregonian.com.



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