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EAST OREGONIAN

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WINNER OF THE 2016 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

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KILLINGS SHOCK HERMISTON

Mother survives, in stable condition

East Oregonian

Andria E. Bye, 35, is the lone survivor of shootings Thursday in Hermiston that claimed three lives, including her teenage son.

Bye remains at Good Shepherd Medical Center, Hermiston, where hospital spokesperson Nick Bejarano said she was in "stable" condition. Bye's aunt, Terressa Baldrige, said she is expected to make a full physical recovery.

Hermiston police responded Thursday to 9-1-1 calls of gunshots and found Bye in a bedroom at 130 N.W. 11th St., the home of Kenneth Valdez, 45. The bodies of Valdez and Jason Huston, 45, also were in the room. Huston, according to police, shot and killed Valdez, shot Bye, and turned the gun on himself.

Huston and Bye had previously been in a relationship, but had never been married.

Bye's son, 14-year-old James "JJ" Hurtado, was found dead Thursday night off Country Lane in a remote area west of Hermiston. JJ was last seen Thursday morning when Huston pickup him up in Umatilla to play disc golf at McNary Park, according to Hermiston Police Chief Jason Edmiston.

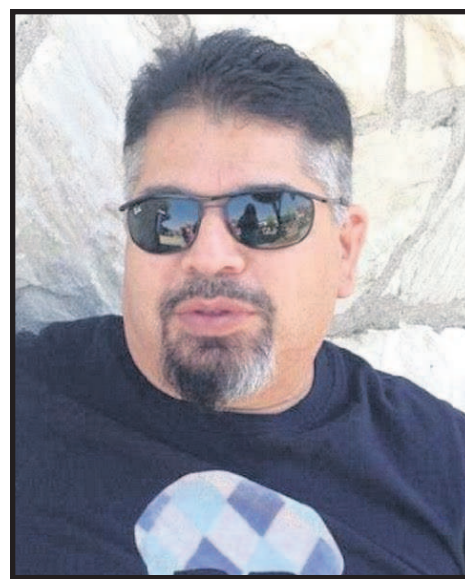
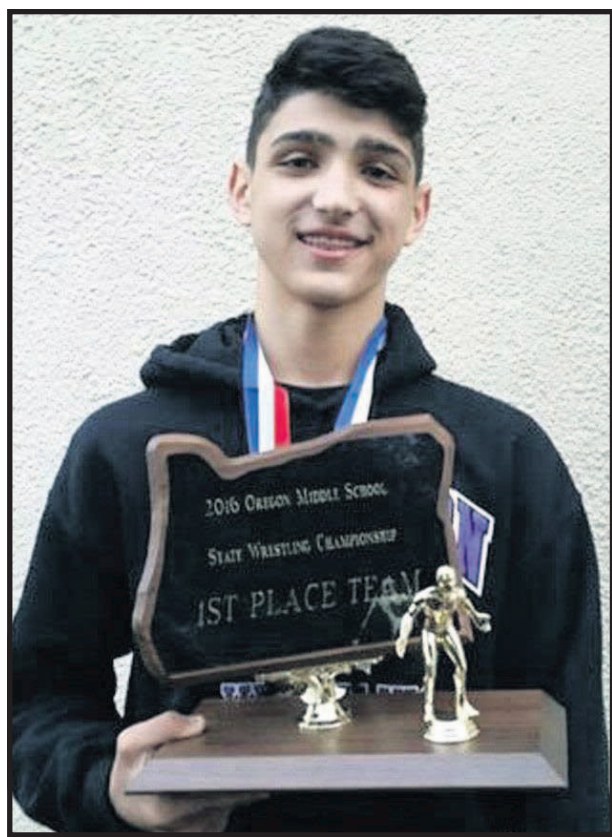
The Umatilla County Sheriff's Office is handling the investigation into that homicide. Sheriff Terry Rowan said the teen was shot but he does not yet know the motive and "would hate to even speculate." He added there was no evidence of a struggle nor that Huston kidnapped Hurtado.

Hurtado's body remained at the scene Friday until Friday afternoon, Rowan said, where the Oregon State Police crime lab gathered evidence, along with law enforcement detectives. An autopsy is expected Saturday.

Country Lane intersects with Bridge Road, where police also found one of Huston's vehicles.

At 11:06 a.m. on Thursday, Umatilla County dispatchers broadcast a report

See SHOOTING/12A



Contributed photos

ABOVE: Ken Valdez was shot and killed in his Hermiston home Thursday.

LEFT: James "JJ" Hurtado poses with the 2016 Oregon middle school team championship trophy in wrestling, which he helped Sandstone Middle School win. Hurtado was found dead Thursday night outside of Hermiston.



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Umatilla County Sheriff's deputies investigate Friday near where the body of James "JJ" Hurtado was discovered late Thursday evening at the end of Country Lane west of Hermiston.

Community mourns two lives cut short

By JADE MCDOWELL and ALEXA LOUGEE
East Oregonian

Family and friends are mourning two people who were victims in Thursday's tragic killings.

Those who knew James "JJ" Hurtado are remembering the teen as a generous, athletic boy who loved his family.

Hurtado, 14, attended Sandstone Middle School and was set to begin his freshman year at Hermiston High School later this month. His body was found by police late Thursday in a remote area west of Hermiston, the apparent victim of a homicide.

Hurtado's great aunt Terressa Baldrige, speaking on behalf of the family, described him as a "fun, happy kid."

She said he was a typical teenage boy who enjoyed video games, but he was also a talented athlete who at different times competed in football, baseball, wrestling and cross country. He even went to state for wrestling as a middle school student.

"He was just an athletic kid with tons of energy and lots of dedication," she said.

Baldrige said he had a girlfriend he adored and she wasn't surprised that adults remembering him on Facebook were describing him as a well-liked, polite young man.

"He was a charmer, that kid," she said.

While many teenage boys make a show of rolling their eyes at family

See DEATH/12A

"He had a very generous personality and always put other people first."

— Mischa Meyer, friend of Hurtado



Visit Garner's Sporting Goods in Pendleton for one hat

Garner's Sporting Goods

ATHENA

Residents fight bank closure

By KATHY ANEY
East Oregonian

A green highway sign sits only yards away from the tiny U.S. Bank branch at the corner of Third and Main in Athena.

One arrow directs motorists toward Pendleton. The second points to Milton-Freewater.

Oddly, those are the two locations where Athena residents will be able to do their banking once U.S. Bank closes the branch on Nov. 4. The closest, Milton-Freewater, is 12 miles northeast, while Pendleton is 18 miles the other direction.

A letter from U.S. Bank dated Aug. 4 arrived in mailboxes earlier this month to inform customers of the branch's impending closure.

Oregon Sen. Bill Hansell, an Athena resident, opened up a savings account at the branch in the mid-1950s after he sold his first 4-H pig at auction.

"I've had an account there for the last 60-some years," Hansell said. "I kept it even during college and when I went overseas."

The bank has a long history in Athena, a town of about 1,100. According to University of Oregon Archives, it opened as the



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Residents in the Athena will have to do their banking in Milton-Freewater or Pendleton once the US Bank closes its local branch Nov. 4.

First National Bank of Athena in 1912. Ownership shifted to the U.S. Bank of Portland in 1939 and later U.S. Bank.

Not willing to let the bank slip quietly away into the night, Hansell and Athena Mayor John Shafer organized a town hall meeting for Wednesday night. About 30 residents filled city council chambers on short notice after the town grapevine did its work.

"This is not a city council meeting in any way, shape or form," Shafer said. "This is simply citizens getting together to maintain our bank."

The mayor said they didn't gather to complain, but to brainstorm.

That said, Hansell vented a bit before broaching a solution. He read from the U.S. Bank closure

See BANK/8A

Marine patrol works to protect boaters from dam, vice versa

By ALEXA LOUGEE
East Oregonian

The Columbia River is a beacon for recreation. On any given summer day its shores are scattered with swimmers and anglers. Boats dot its waters, some on board fishing and some out for a relaxing ride.

It's the job of Sgt. Dave Johnson of the Umatilla County Sheriff's Office to monitor activity and help keep the waters safe for everyone.

"This river is very hazardous," Johnson said.

He cites the turbulence from the water released by McNary Dam, currents that can reach 8 mph and cold water runoff from melting mountain snow. One area he regularly monitors is the Boat Restricted Zone, which includes most of the McNary Dam spillway. Boats are not allowed in what Johnson calls the "BRZ." It's a tempting place for fishermen seeking to catch the big one coming off the fish ladder, but boaters caught in the area are subject to a \$430 fine. Aside from a fine, there are real safety risks

See WATER/12A



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