Russell, a one-year-old yellow lab owned by Curt Thompson of Pendleton, bounds through the water while chasing a ball Wednesday during the Doggie Dip Day at the Pendleton Aquatic Center.
Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Dog's-eye view of Doggie Dip Day video online

EAST OREGONIAN

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2016

140th Year, No. 234 | WINNER OF THE 2016 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD | One dollar

A swift return

Birds seek chimneys in place of dwindling old growth habitat

BY KATHY ANEY
East Oregonian

The birdwatchers turned their eyes to the sky.

The tiny crowd parked across the street from the Umatilla County Road Department, 3920 Westgate, Pendleton on Tuesday evening hoped to see a cloud of Vaux's swifts appear. On the previous two evenings, the birds had gathered, circled and finally dived into the facility's brick chimney for an overnight stay.

On this night, the sky, in full sunset glow, remained disappointingly devoid of life until several dozen birds flitted into view about 7 o'clock. Over the next half hour, the twittering flock slowly swelled to almost 400. About 7:45, the birds streamed into the chimney, leaving a tranquil sky, and just like that, the show was over.

The annual Vaux's swift watch by the Pendleton Bird Club began after a similar cloud of swifts arrived two summers ago to the delight of local birders. The reason for their joy was understandable. The survival of swifts is a worry for those who study the bird. Swifts prefer to roost in hollowed-out trees found in old-growth stands, a habitat that has dwindled. The birds, which can't fluff their feathers for

See SWIFTS/8A

Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Vaux's swifts circle a chimney at a Umatilla County Roads Department building off Westgate on Wednesday evening in Pendleton.

GOOD MORNING TO FREDRICK LICURSE OF PENDLETON

Visit Antiques and Art on Main in Pendleton for a vintage cookie cutter and $10 coupon

ANTIQUES AND ART ON MAIN

BMCC pool will open in October

Will bandage pool for two years, share costs with stakeholders

By KATHY ANEY
East Oregonian

Swim teams from Pendleton and Hermiston could be back in the pool by early October.

The swim season has been in question since this spring when Blue Mountain Community College drained and closed the pool where the teams practice and compete.

The deteriorating swimming pool needs a major overhaul. During a tour of the facility in late July, the public eyeballed cracked concrete, rusty pipes, lead paint on the poolroom walls, inefficient pumps, an insufficient HVAC system and sheetrock bulging with moisture.

The board has been weighing the estimated $2.3 million renovation costs against the idea of simply shuttering the pool. They chose a solution somewhere in between.

On Wednesday, the board voted unanimously to pay $25,000 to temporarily bandage the pool. Stakeholders (Pendleton and Hermiston School Districts and the Pendleton Swim Association) will split the remainder of emergency repair costs, estimated at another $25,000. The idea came out of two meetings held this summer with city government, swim team and school district officials from Pendleton and Hermiston.

See POOL/8A

HERMISTON

Police chief clarifies timeline in murder-suicide

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

Jason Huston made two phone calls in the final moments of his life, including one to his mother.

Hermiston Police Chief Jason Edmiston on Wednesday released a more detailed timeline of Huston's actions on Aug. 18 when he killed a teenage boy, a lifelong friend and then himself.

Edmiston in the written statement said all times are approximate:

10 a.m. — Huston, 45, picked up James "JJ" Hurtado at the boy's grandparents' house in Umatilla. The 14-year-old was the son of Huston's ex-girlfriend, Andria Bye, 35, and Huston was a father figure to him.

> "Inasmuch as we want to learn the 'Why,' we may never get to a point where that is known."
> **— Jason Edmiston,** Hermiston police chief

10-11 a.m. — Huston drove Hurtado to a location near the Umatilla River and just off Country Lane outside Hermiston. "This was a place Huston was familiar with as he

See TIMELINE/8A

PENDLETON

Party returns to town next week

Happy Canyon, Round-Up expecting uptick in this year's attendance

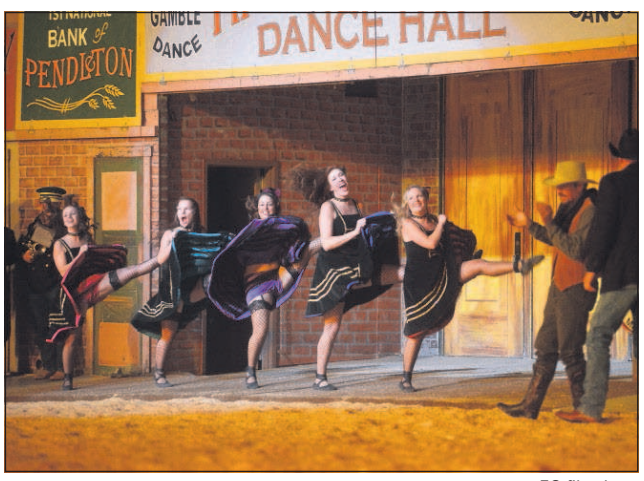
By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

Happy Canyon is joining the Pendleton Round-Up in the century club next week, and people are responding in kind.

Corey Neistadt, the Happy Canyon publicity director, said Wednesday that Happy Canyon has sold 54 percent more tickets for the venerable wild west show than it did a year ago.

Neistadt said they have sold approximately 19,000

See HAPPY CANYON/8A



EO file photo

The Happy Canyon dancers perform during the town act of the Happy Canyon Night Show during the Pendleton Round-Up.

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