

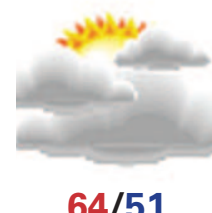
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EAST OREGONIAN

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2016

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HERMISTON

Five guys vie for four council seats

Will take office in Jan. for four year term

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
East Oregonian

Hermiston voters will be faced with five choices for city council on the November ballot, but there are only four seats available.

Incumbents Manuel Gutierrez, Rod Hardin, John Kirwan and Doug Primmer,



Gomolski



Gutierrez



Hardin



Kirwan



Primmer

and challenger Mark Gomolski, are all running against each other for the four

open at-large council seats. The top four vote-getters will take office in January for a

four year term. Here are the candidates, in alphabetical order:

Mark Gomolski

Gomolski retired to Hermiston from Chicago about a year and a half ago and said he is anxious to get involved in the community in a more official capacity.

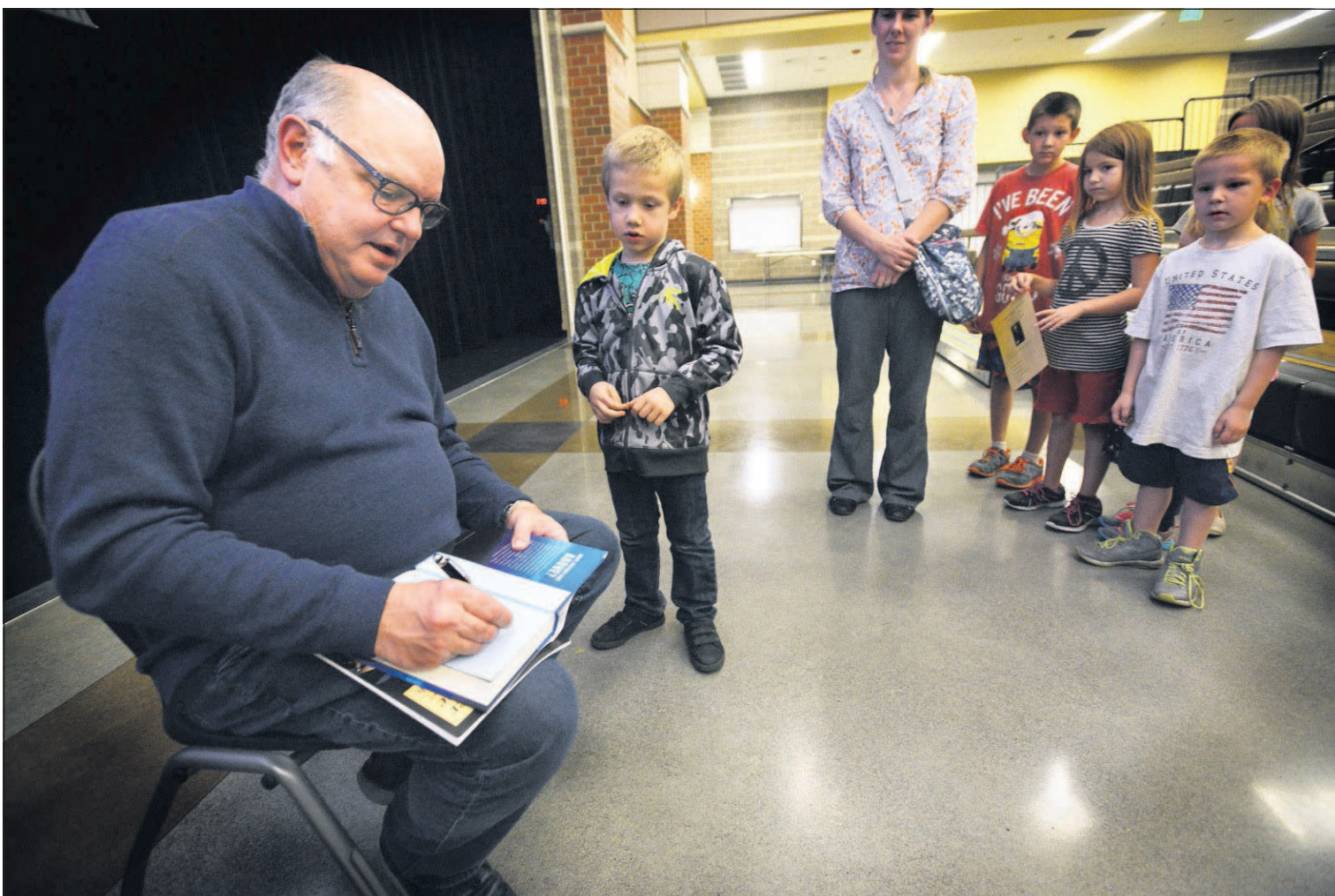
In Chicago he worked in various positions in city and county government. In Hermiston he managed Umatilla County Commissioner Bill Elfering's re-election campaign in the spring.

Gomolski said as a city councilor he would work to increase the city's communication with citizens. He said often Hermiston residents don't even know who their city councilors are, and he would like to change that.

He also had ideas for attracting tourism, including pursuing grants to expand the Maxwell Siding train museum, starting a hot air

See **COUNCIL/8A**

Author Roland Smith speaks at Armand Larive Middle School



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Oregon author Roland Smith signs a copy of his new novel "Above" for Micah Wattenburger, 6, on Wednesday at Armand Larive Middle School in Hermiston.

Wild about writing

Oregon author details real-life adventures behind novels

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
East Oregonian

When author Roland Smith was in fourth grade, he decided he was going to catch Bigfoot.

It felt like there were stories in the newspaper about Sasquatch sightings every day, he said, so it seemed perfectly logical to his little boy mind that if he just dug a hole in the back yard of his parents'

Portland home and covered it with newspapers, Bigfoot would fall in. Instead one morning as he ate his cereal he watched his mother abruptly disappear from view.

"I said, 'It works!'" he told

an audience at Armand Larive Middle School on Wednesday. "When she got out of the hospital — it was just a broken femur, but apparently that hurts — I was grounded forever."

"When my new book comes out, you'll know some of it was written right here in Hermiston."

— **Roland Smith**, author, on writing everyday

It's only fitting that one of the Oregon author's young adult novels is titled Sasquatch.

Most of Smith's books relay fantastical adventures, but each of them have some roots in his life. Smith started working at the Oregon Zoo at age 18 and later became a wildlife biologist, so scenes in his books featuring

See **AUTHOR/8A**

Hash oil labs pose explosive danger

Creating, possessing potent pot product against the law

By **PHIL WRIGHT**
East Oregonian

Police in Umatilla County in recent months discovered home labs built to extract oils from marijuana. The police chiefs for Pendleton and Hermiston stressed the butane hash oil operations come with serious public safety concerns.

"We're not just talking about marijuana here, people," Hermiston Police Chief Jason Edmiston said. "This is dangerous."

Pendleton police found one lab when responding to an explosion the night of July 23 at a home on the north end of Southwest 12th Street off Nye Avenue.

Pendleton Police Chief Stuart Roberts said two people suffered burns when the oven they were using exploded.

And Hermiston police in August happened upon a neighborhood lab using more than 17 pounds of marijuana stems and leaves to create the oil.

"Just like we used to do the meth labs," Edmiston said, "we had to call clean-up folks." The Blue Mountain Enforcement Narcotics Team also responded.

Roberts is the chairman of the drug team's board. Even though marijuana is legal, creating and possessing hash oil is against the law, he said, and the team has serious investigations underway to crack down on producers selling pounds of the substance on the black market.

A market, that, in effect, is evolving out of states legalizing the growing of marijuana.

The production of hash oil involves filling a canister with marijuana — often the leftover parts of the plant — then soaking it with a solvent such as butane, which leaches the oils containing the intoxicating chemicals. The solvent must then be burned off to create the oil. Roberts said that is what makes the labs "so stinking volatile."

The remaining substance, though, is a purer form of marijuana, which, he said "is the obvious selling point."

Hash oil also has street names of honey oil or dabs, and looks like brown or honey-colored glass candy. Roberts said part of the allure is lay folks would not recognize the drug. But instructional videos for making hash oil abound online.

Roberts said the labs are a statewide problem and a common talking point among police administrators. Edmiston

See **OIL/8A**

Measure 97 foes raise \$16.8M to fight corporate sales tax

By **PARIS ACHEN**
Capital Bureau

SALEM — Opponents of a controversial corporate sales tax measure on the November ballot have reported raising \$16.8 million to quash the proposal.

Two political action committees supporting Measure 97 have raised more than \$7 million and spent nearly \$3 million, according to the Secretary of State's Office. The committees seeking to defeat the measure reported spending \$11.6 million. Both sides filed a required campaign finance report by a late Tuesday deadline.

The Measure 97 appears to be

on track to set a record for the most raised for a ballot measure contest, said Jim Moore, political science professor and director of the Tom McCall Center for Policy Innovation at Pacific University.

Opponents and supporters are "still sitting on piles of money to use to defeat or pass this thing," Moore said.

The current record was set by Measure 92 in 2014, a proposal to require labeling of genetically modified foods. Opponents of that measure raised more than \$20 million, while supporters raised \$8 million.

Measure 97 would levy a 2.5 percent "gross receipts" tax on

certain corporations' Oregon sales exceeding \$25 million.

The tax would bring in an estimated \$3 billion per year in new revenue, representing the largest sales tax in the state's history and boosting the state's general fund by 25 percent.

Union-backed Our Oregon placed the measure on the ballot through the state's initiative petition process. Supporters say the new money would help provide more sustainable and adequate funding for education, health care and senior services. Meanwhile, opponents point to estimates by

See **TAX/8A**



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