

HERMISTON

Last community dinner at old venue

Group looks for new home as senior center set to move

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
East Oregonian

The Hermiston Senior Center was bustling Christmas Day as people sat down for the final Community Fellowship Dinner of the season.

Over 100 volunteers helped prepare and serve ham and all the fixings, as well as cookies and pies, to a hungry crowd of about 350 — 250 at the senior center and 100 home deliveries. The dinners, which are offered at Thanksgiving and Christmas each year, are entirely funded by donations from local businesses, organizations and individuals.

“All aspects of the community are represented at the dinners,” said Makayla Humphreys, secretary for the fellowship dinner. “The homeless, fairly wealthy, business people, laborers. All areas are represented.”

Jan Cassens, who has been volunteering with the meals for 10 years, said the program is now looking for a new location in which to serve food, as all operations will be moved when work begins on the new senior center building, to be called the Harkenrider Center.

“We’re kind of in limbo,” she said. “The city received a grant to build a new center. But it requires



Photo contributed by T.G. Marks
Lilee Ruiz, 12, pipes whipped cream onto a slice of pie Sunday at the Community Fellowship Dinner at the Hermiston Senior Center.

five years of no one but the seniors using it. Community Fellowship Dinners are open to everyone, so we couldn’t use it for five years, anyway. So we’re looking for a new venue with a good-sized kitchen.”

Cassens said for big meals like Thanksgiving, volunteers will cook 30 to 35 turkeys in the span of two days.

“It takes a lot of space — we need a place to cook hams and turkeys for our meals,” she said.

The new venue must also have adequate seating, as the current hall holds 120 at a time — and people are fed in shifts.

“We’ve served as many as 850 meals in one dinner,” Cassens said, recalling a Thanksgiving feast a few



Kathy Stolz manages the hotline for meal delivery and table service.



Volunteers lay out pies. Over 120 pies in nine varieties were served.

years ago.

The current senior center is on the former Umatilla County Fairgrounds, at 435 W. Orchard Ave., which was purchased by the Hermiston School District for potential future expansion of the high school.

The new senior center will be on Ridgeway Avenue behind the Hermiston Public Library.

BMCC Christmas Eve dinner serves 800

PENDLETON — Hosting its annual Christmas Eve dinner in a larger venue paid dividends for Blue Mountain Community College.

In its first year at the Pendleton Convention Center, the dinner attracted 743 guests, BMCC outreach program assistant Abby Pierson said.

Including the 60 volunteers who staffed the event, Pierson said BMCC served more than 800 people.

“It was extremely successful,” she said, adding that the event usually averages between 500 and 600 people.

Pierson said no one was turned away from the free meal.



Photo courtesy of Abby Pierson
Blue Mountain Community College mascot Timber poses by a Christmas tree at the college's annual Christmas Eve dinner at the Pendleton Convention Center.

Rape defendant asks for release from jail

HERMISTON — Hermiston rape defendant Jose Marvin Antonio Perdomo Funez has a release hearing Tuesday.

Funez, 30, has been in the Umatilla County Jail, Pendleton, since Hermiston police arrested him at the end of November. The state accused him of first-degree rape and sexual abuse of a woman on Aug. 5. He pleaded not guilty to each count.

Funez through defense attorney Kent Fisher filed a motion on Dec. 12 asking the court to release him from jail on his own recognizance or to lower the \$100,000 bail circuit Judge Eva Temple set.

The court schedule shows Temple takes up the request at 1:15 p.m. Tuesday at the Stafford Hansell Government Center, Hermiston.

BRIEFLY

Recreation classes feature yoga, karate

PENDLETON — Upcoming yoga and karate classes are great for helping people with their New Year’s resolutions.

No prior experience is needed for the yoga class, which meets for a three-week session beginning Tuesday, Jan. 3. It’s offered Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5:15-6:30 p.m. at the Pendleton Recreation Center, 510 S.W. Dorion Ave. The session fee is \$40 or people can pay a \$9 fee for each drop-in class.

Sensei Lars Hansen will teach participants to use karate as a tool to become better people. The classes start Tuesday, Jan. 3 and take place Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5-6 p.m. at the Pendleton Recreation Center. The fee is \$50 per month. In addition, there is a \$20 shirt fee. People may wear black sweats (no yoga pants) or purchase karate pants from the instructor for \$15-\$25.

People who plan to take these classes need to register a week in advance. To register, visit www.pendletonparksandrec.com or stop by the parks office, 865 Tutuilla Road. For more information, call 541-276-8100.

Students to address Heppner chamber

HEPPNER — A group of Heppner High School seniors who have been working at Blue Mountain Investment Management will share about the project during the Heppner Chamber of Commerce’s annual luncheon.

The no-host event is Thursday, Jan. 5 at noon in the dining room at St. Patrick’s Senior Center, 190 N. Main St., Heppner. Pudding on the Ritz is catering the meal, which features pork loin. The cost is \$10.

Those planning to attend must RSVP by Wednesday by contacting 541-676-5536 or heppnerchamber@centurytel.net.

Resolution Run kicks off new year

HERMISTON — Whether you’re aiming to accomplish fitness goals for 2017 or just want to start the year off with family and friends, the Resolution Run is for you.

Providing a head start for the new year, the event is Saturday at 10 a.m. at Riverfront Park and the Oxbow Trail, Hermiston. There is no fee. Families, kids, strollers, and pets are all welcome to participate.

The main 5K course follows the Oxbow Trail, starting and ending at Riverfront Park. An optional detour through the off-road trails north of the park follows the river and adds an extra mile to the total distance. There are no rules for how short or how long participants run or walk.

Sponsored by a group of local runners, the finish line usually greets participants with high fives, hot chocolate, water and snacks. Resolution Run T-shirts will be available for purchase, with proceeds going to the Hermiston High School cross country teams. For more information, contact Tim Beal at timothybeal@gmail.com or 509-954-8778.

Get ready to rumba

HERMISTON — People can learn how to rumba, a graceful and sensual dance step — or take a sampler class that features the cha cha, waltz, one-step swing and more — during sessions offered through Hermiston Parks & Recreation.

The classes are Wednesdays from Jan. 11 through Feb. 22 (there’s no class Feb. 8). The sampler class is from 6:15-7:15 p.m. and the rumba is from 7:30-8:30 p.m. in the basement at the Hermiston Public Library, 235 E. Gladys Ave. The cost for either class is \$30 for Hermiston residents and \$38 for non-residents. It’s open to ages 14 and up.

No prior experience is required. Participants should wear comfortable shoes.

For more information, visit www.hermistonrecreation.com. To register, call 541-667-5018 or stop by the recreation office, 180 N.E. Second St., Hermiston.

MISSION

Regional youth art show accepting entries

East Oregonian

Tamastlikt Cultural Institute invites all youth under the age of 19 to participate in its upcoming art show and competition, ArtWORKz 2017.

Art submissions must be received at the Tamastlikt Cultural Institute by Jan. 19. There is no entry fee. An information sheet and entry forms are available at www.tamastlikt.org/exhibits.cfm.

Young artists, both tribal and non-tribal, from around the region are encouraged to submit an original art object for competition. Last year, more than 100 talented artists of all ages competed in the event.

“This art show and competition has grown every year and the caliber of art is incredible,” said



Photo contributed by Tamastlikt Cultural Institute
Viola Minthorn views a past ArtWORKz exhibit at Tamastlikt Cultural Institute in Mission. Youths up to age 19 are invited to enter works for the 2017 event.

Randall Melton, collections curator. “Young artists are excited to display their artwork in a true gallery setting.”

Only one piece of art may be submitted for competition. The show is open

to individuals and groups of collaborating artists. All forms of art media are acceptable and any discipline of artwork including traditional tribal work, such as beadwork, weaving and parfleche painting.

The ArtWORKz show will be on exhibit in the Tamastlikt gallery from Saturday, Jan. 28 through Friday, March. The submissions will be judged by recognized professional artists and awards will be presented at an Artists Reception Saturday, Feb. 18 at 1 p.m.

There are three age categories: 10 and under, 11-14 and 15-18. Youth artists will compete for grand prize, awards of excellence, awards of merit, honorable mentions, best emerging artist and artists’ choice — voted on by the artists themselves.

An info sheet with rules and regulations can be found at www.tamastlikt.org. For more information, contact Melton at 541-429-7720 or randall.melton@tamastlikt.org.

PENDLETON

Cleo reunited with family before Christmas

East Oregonian and Bellingham Herald

Cleo the cat has returned home.

The 7-month-old Russian blue, gone missing for nearly two weeks after a car crash near Pendleton on Nov. 27 and found in a barn a mile away, is back with her family in Bellingham, Washington.

The *East Oregonian* published a story on Dec. 14 about the Egan family crashing while moving from Cedar City, Utah, to Bellingham. The four people in the vehicle weren’t hurt badly, but their dog was killed and Cleo was gone.

The Egans didn’t expect to see her again, but Cleo turned up in the barn of Robin Harris, who called the number on the tag and got in touch with the owners. Harris then brought the cat to Pendleton Animal Welfare Shelter and together with the



EO file photo
Robin Harris of Mission found this cat, Cleo, in her hay barn in early December and called the number on her tags to find the owners.

Egans worked on a plan to get her back to her owners.

Pet transport services were too expensive, Amanda Egan told the *Bellingham Herald*, and it was difficult to find someone who was headed even as far as Seattle. A last resort, Egan and Harris decided, would be to send her with a shelter board member

as far as Portland, which was still farther than the Egans had hoped to drive.

The story ran in the *EO* in hopes that someone would come forward and offer to bring Cleo home. The idea worked.

The story caught the eye of the Debbie and Mike Doyle, a Bellingham family

who had lived in Pendleton and were making the drive to Boise, Idaho, where their daughter, Kaitlin, had just graduated from Boise State University. The Doyles were one of several families who reached out and offered to take Cleo, but they were the only ones going clear to Bellingham, Harris said.

“I guess we’re just softies for cats,” Debbie Doyle said Friday, adding that her family has two of their own. “Plus, we know what it’s like to lose something.”

Cleo reunited with the Egans on Sunday, Dec. 18.

“I can say it was one of the best Christmas gifts to get at least one of our pets back,” Egan said. “I can’t really describe the feeling because we were very attached to our pets, and we are still incredibly sad about losing our dog, but it makes it a little easier to have Cleo back with us.”

Happy New Year!

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