

MILTON-FREEWATER

Six arrested in drug raid

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

Police made six arrests during a Tuesday morning drug raid in Milton-Freewater.

Pendleton Police Chief Stuart Roberts said members of the Oregon State Police SWAT team served a search warrant for the Blue Mountain Narcotics Team at approximately 5:10 a.m. at the home at 109 N.W. First Ave. Roberts is the director of the drug task force's board.

He confirmed police made the following arrests:

- Kathy Ann Thomas, 50, for delivery and possession of methamphetamine and frequenting where drugs are kept and sold;
- Joseph Lee Sumerlin, 37, for delivery and possession of methamphetamine

- and frequenting;
- Shirley Mae Weems, 29, for frequenting;
- Cristobal Jaimes Rogel, 31, for frequenting;
- Timothy Lee Prock, 56, on a Milton-Freewater Municipal Court Warrant and for frequenting;
- and Jeffrey Carl Ellis, 29, for frequenting.

The frequenting charge is a misdemeanor, while Thomas and Sumerlin face felonies for the possession and delivery charges. All six remained in the Umatilla County Jail, Pendleton, as of Tuesday evening.

Roberts did not provide details of the takedown.

This is the second BENT raid this year in Milton-Freewater. The team on May 31 arrested Adan Nieves Torres, 43, of 504 Elzora Loop, and Carlos Razo Cisneros, 43, of 1501

N. Elizabeth St., Space F in the Locust Mobile Village.

Torres has pleaded not guilty to 14 counts, including delivery and possession of heroin, methamphetamine and cocaine. Umatilla County Circuit Court records show he paid \$150,000 on Aug. 16 to bail out of jail.

His next court hearing is Nov. 16.

Cisneros faces four charges — methamphetamine delivery and possession, tampering with physical evidence, and unlawful possession of a firearm — and has pleaded not guilty to each. He remains out of jail on a conditional release and has a pre-trial conference Wednesday in circuit court in Pendleton.

Contact Phil Wright at pwright@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0833.

PENDLETON

Three parks to get new playgrounds

East Oregonian

When the ice thaws and the snow melts, children from North Hill, South Hill, Sherwood Heights and from across Pendleton will have access to three new playgrounds.

The Pendleton City Council approved the replacement of playgrounds at Aldrich, May and Sherwood parks at a meeting Tuesday. Parks and Recreation Director Donnie Cook said the city plans to install the new equipment in the spring.

The playgrounds Aldrich, May and Sherwood were three of the five the parks department shut down in 2015 after safety

inspections deemed the structures unsafe. While the playground removed at Vincent Park went unreplaced because of its proximity to Pioneer Park and the Kiwanis Club of Pendleton agreed to take on maintenance and liability of the Kiwanis Park playground if it was reopened, the parks department began writing grant applications to acquire new playgrounds for the other three parks.

The department raised \$95,000 through a \$56,500 state grant and smaller private grants. The city was also aided by the winning playground vendor, GameTime of Fort Payne, Alabama, who agreed to match the city's \$50,000

equipment purchase. Cook said this means the city was able to buy higher quality equipment with a larger footprint, while the rest of the budget can continue to go toward excavation, the playground surface and installation.

The new playgrounds will also feature new swing sets, although it's not included in the bid package. Cook said a combination of grant funding and the parks budget will cover the swing sets, which Cook estimates cost \$1,500 each.

With most of the parks' playground inventory now in good shape, Cook said his next focus will be to replace the equipment at Airport Park.

JOHN DAY

Poet laureate to share poetry, stories

East Oregonian

Oregon Poet Laureate Elizabeth Woody will share selections from her poetry and stories during an informal event in John Day.

Open to the public, the free gathering is Monday at 7 p.m. at the John Day United Methodist Church, 126 N.W. Canyon St. After Woody's readings, a reception will be held so people can greet her.

Woody is the state's eighth poet laureate since 1921. There was a lapse in appointments between 1990 to 2005. Woody's two-year appointment features outreach as an ambassador of poetry across the state.

In March 2016, she was appointed Oregon's Poet Laureate by Governor Kate Brown — the first American Indian to be so named. An enrolled member of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, Woody is of Yakama Nation descent.

"Woody follows in the tradition of peoples who have understood the power of language, and the place of a poet/singer/storyteller at the center of the world," said Joy Harjo, a playwright and poet.

Woody received the American Book Award in 1990, and the discretionary William Stafford Memorial Award for Poetry and was a finalist for the Oregon Book Awards in 1995. She has published three books

of poetry. In addition, Woody writes short fiction, essays and is a visual artist.

Her work is held in high acclaim, including by The Bloomsbury Review, which highlights lively writing by authors who might not receive attention due to smaller promotional budgets.

"Her poems are like hands and hearts and also like lights: they grip and pulse and illuminate. Like the woman herself, the work is grand and modest and forceful. It will shake you, and move you deeply," the publication said about Woody's work.

Woody earned a master's degree in public administration through the Mark O. Hatfield School of Government's Executive Leadership Institute at Portland State University, a bachelor's degree in humanities from The Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington, and studied creative writing and two-dimensional arts at the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe. She has taught at the Institute of American Indian Arts and at Portland State University.

For more about Woody, visit www.oregonpoetlaureate.org/elizabeth-woody.

Contact Community Editor Tammy Malgesini at tmalgesini@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4539



Woody

IRRIGON



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Fire units respond to a brush fire along the southern banks of the Columbia River off of Pleasant View Road east of Irrigon.

Fire burns part of wildlife refuge

East Oregonian

A fire that started as an agricultural burn singed about six acres east of Irrigon on Tuesday afternoon. A man was burning in his back yard when the winds picked up and took the fire into another yard, and to the nearby Umatilla National Wildlife Refuge.

"The wind just got away from him," said Lt. Adam Cole with Boardman Fire Department. Boardman, along with the Umatilla Rural Fire District, assisted the Irrigon Rural Fire Department with the blaze. No structures were burned, but the man's house, his corral and a neighbor's house were threatened.

Cole said 90 percent of the burning was in the refuge area. He asked people to be careful and watch the weather, even though fire season is over.

"If he had looked out for the weather — he didn't even check — the winds are gusting 10-15, and getting up to 25 miles per hour," Cole said.

BRIEFLY

Conservation grants available through NRCS

PENDLETON — The Natural Resource Conservation Service is accepting applications from farmers, ranchers and private forestland owners for financial assistance through the agency's Environmental Quality Incentives Program, or EQIP, which helps agricultural producers to offset the cost of conservation projects.

Examples of conservation activities include installing efficient irrigation systems to save water and reduce energy consumption; planting cover crops to improve soil health and water quality; and removing invasive juniper trees to enhance wildlife habitat.

Oregon EQIP funds are available within targeted watersheds in each county to address natural resource concerns, as identified by landowners, government agencies and conservation partners. The deadline to apply is Nov. 17.

For more information about the program, visit www.nrcs.usda.gov.

Umatilla County firefighters help battle Santa Cruz blaze

HERMISTON — Several Umatilla County crews are among the Oregonians in California battling wildfires this week. Three people from Umatilla County Fire District and several from Pendleton are now fighting the Bear Fire in Santa Cruz, after starting in the Los Angeles area.

Crews from Oregon that were helping fight the fires in Northern California will be returning to their home stations in the next day, as weather improves and firefighters work to contain the blaze.

The affected parts of Southern California still remain under Red Flag warnings, and weather is expected to be hot, dry and windy. Oregon crews are expected to be there at least through this weekend.

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