

PENDLETON

Spray paint vandal strikes North Hill

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

Pendleton police are on the track of someone who vandalized properties and vehicles Saturday night in a North Hill neighborhood.

“We have some investigative leads we are following on now to try and lock this thing down and make progress on it,” Police Chief Stuart Roberts said.

Police received the first report of the crimes Sunday morning. Roberts said the culprit sprayed gold metallic paint on three residential properties and five vehicles along Northwest Bailey Avenue, causing thousands of dollars in damage.

“This is significant in terms of the dollar value loss to the victims,” the chief said.

The gold paint is the common denominator here, he said, and police recovered the paint cans. The graffiti varied from the phrase “F--- Donald Trump” with a line through “Trump” to the single word “Blood” on one tailgate to “#FreeOG Joseph Johnson” on a building.

Roberts said he had no idea what the miscreant meant with the last one. Pendleton police deal with a couple of local offenders named Joseph Johnson, he said, but he did not know any of them who might be behind bars.

Pendleton has not been targeted by



Photo contributed by Pendleton Police Department

Multiple vehicles and properties were the targets of a graffiti vandal this weekend on Pendleton’s North Hill. Police Chief Stuart Roberts said the damage is costly to the victims. Investigators are working the case, he said, and police also are asking for the public’s help.

graffiti for a while, Roberts said, but late last summer the “F--- Donald Trump” showed up in black spray paint on a side of the strip mall on the 100 block of Southwest 18th Street. Roberts said he notified code enforcement right off to cover up the defacement. Roberts said

that was an isolated incident at the time.

While police are working the case, the department also is asking for the public’s help. If anyone have information about the vandalism, contact the local 24-hour dispatch center at 541-966-3651.

FLANAGAN: Community raising funds to help the family with medical and funeral expenses

Continued from 1A

Thursday morning. Scott stayed back to care for the other boys. In Portland, the surreal nightmare continued as surgeons tried to stay ahead of the rare but deadly infection, known as necrotizing fasciitis, by amputating parts of the boy’s body.

“They basically cut him up piece by piece,” Scott said.

“Almost his whole right side was gone,” Sara said. “They kept cutting and hoping. Cutting and hoping.”

Eventually, as Liam kept going downhill, he was transferred to Randall Children’s Hospital on Sunday so another team could take a look at the problem. That night, Liam died.

Sara said she is still processing. Her emotions run the gamut. She smiles in wonderment as she recalls how he tried to keep his family and friends from worrying as he lay in his hospital bed in a nest of tubes, electrodes, cables and monitors. He FaceTimed with friends, laughing, joking and showing his tubes.

“He told them ‘It’s just going to be a couple of days and I’ll be coming home,’” Sara said. “He was so strong and so brave.”

At one point, Liam was feeling dehydrated and Sara promised she wouldn’t eat or drink until he was able. Liam wouldn’t have it.

“He took my hand and said he just needed a hug,” she recalled.

Scott spoke to Liam for the last time by phone on Friday.

“I told him to be strong and that he’d be OK,” Scott said. “He said he missed me.”

Now that Liam is gone, Sara and Scott are reeling in a rush of memories.

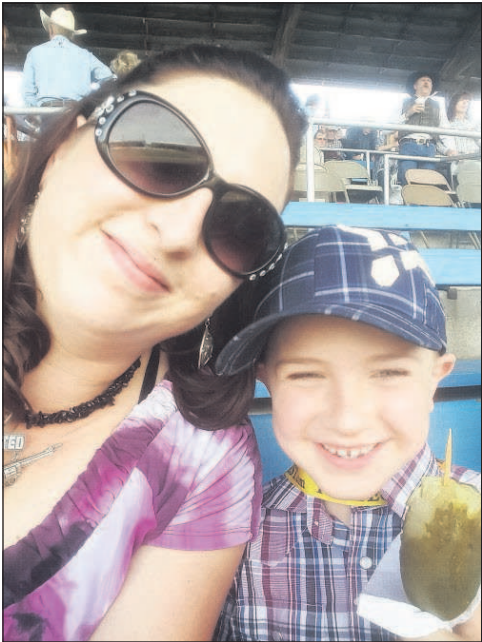
“He was a bright ray of sunshine,” Sara said. “He loved everyone and everyone loved him. He was one of those people who would walk into a room and would draw everyone.”

“He was a lovable kid,” Scott said of the boy who uncomplainingly helped him build fences and do other



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Sara Hebard gets emotional while talking about the life of her son, Liam Flanagan, 8, on Tuesday at her home outside of Pilot Rock. Flanagan died Saturday after cutting his leg while riding his bike and contracting a flesh-eating bacteria.



Contributed photo

Liam Flanagan and Sara Hebard attend the Pendleton Round-Up several years ago.

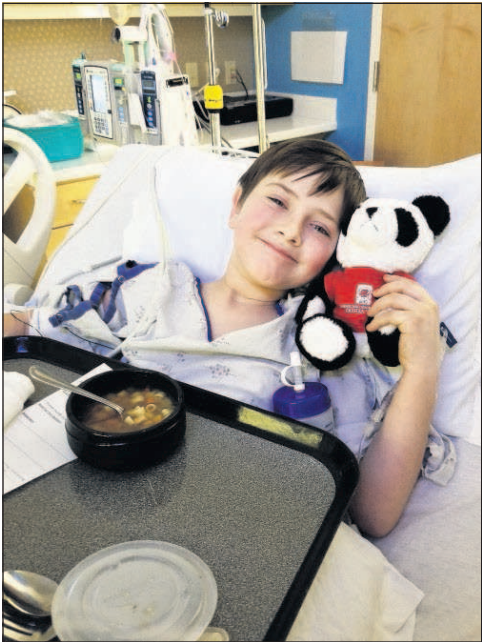
tasks around the farm. “He never had a bad word to say.”

They are second-guessing themselves. Maybe if they’d gotten Liam to the hospital sooner when he first complained of pain they had chalked up as normal. They want other parents to know about this flesh-eating bacteria, something they didn’t previously know about.

“We don’t want any other parents to go through this,”

Scott said.

The community is raising funds to help the family with medical and funeral expenses. A taco feed will take place during Friday’s Pilot Rock High School basketball games (starting at 3 p.m.) against Stanfield to raise funds. A loaded baked potato feed is on tap during the next day’s games against Culver (starting at 1 p.m.). A blanket toss, bake sale and basket raffle will take place



Contributed photo

Liam Flanagan lays in his hospital bed during his battle with necrotizing fasciitis.

both days.

“Everyone is asked to come wearing camo in memory of Liam,” said organizer Joan Harrison.

A Gofundme account had already raised \$4,500 as of Tuesday and accounts have been set up at Banner Bank and Old West Federal Credit Union.

Contact Kathy Aney at kaney@eastoregonian.com or 941-966-0810.

WATER: Would be used to replace water pumped from Columbia River

Continued from 1A

to put in the Umatilla River in the summer. So the city worked out a deal with West Irrigation District to pipe the water into their canal during the growing season instead, allowing the district to save money by pumping less water from the Columbia River.

“We’re really excited about the project because it was the first time it was done in the state,” Hermiston city manager Byron Smith said.

After getting approval for the project from a laundry list of state agencies, Smith said he and West Irrigation District manager Bev

Bridgewater are now sitting on a state committee working to write a set of regulations for other communities that want to follow suit.

Pelleberg said Umatilla wants to do something similar by diverting water coming out of data centers to West Irrigation District.

“We really like what Hermiston is doing with reuse,” he said.

Bridgewater said like the Hermiston water, the Umatilla water would likely be used to replace Columbia River water instead of expanding the district’s acreage. But Pelleberg said he is looking with city

engineers at property that could hold massive open-air ponds to hold recycled Class A water created during the winter for use during the summer, and Bridgewater said that project could possibly lead to expanding the district’s acreage. The city needs to secure funding first, however.

The discussion was one of several presentations at the Oregon Water Coalition meeting, which was combined with the Greater Hermiston Area Chamber of Commerce’s Business to Business breakfast at Hermiston Agricultural Research and Extension Center.

Miff Devlin, water quality supervisor at the Port of Morrow, also spoke about a three-phase recharge project to dilute nitrogen from the groundwater around the port. JR Cook of Northeast Oregon Water Association spoke about an economic impact study being developed for the Mid-Columbia Basin and goals for future water projects in the area. The meeting was wrapped up by a “water rights bootcamp” by attorney Laura Schroeder of Schroeder Law Offices.

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HERMISTON

School schedule change concerns some teachers

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
East Oregonian

The Hermiston School Board will vote at next month’s meeting to decide whether to keep Hermiston’s spring break schedule in line with the rest of the state, or to switch to a schedule aligned with Washington schools.

If the board approves the change, spring break would be the first week of April 2019 instead of the last week of March.

Members of the Educational Council — comprised of two administrators, two school board members, and staff members representing each school and the district office — presented to the board at their work session Monday. They recommended that the district switch to a Washington schedule.

The Educational Council discusses and makes recommendations to the school board about the scheduling of parent-teacher conferences, vacation periods and other events not set by the state education calendar.

Sandra Rice, who represents the district office on the council, said they weighed many factors when making a decision.

“Concerns ranged from scheduling conflicts, to [concerns] that staff were not surveyed on moving the spring break,” she said.

Delfino Osorio Garcia, a Hermiston High School teacher on the council, said they considered the various people the schedule change would impact.

“Ultimately, we decided, ‘What’s best for kids?’” Osorio Garcia said. He said with Hermiston’s move to the Washington athletic conference starting next year, they decided that aligning the vacation schedule with Washington’s made the most sense.

“We knew it would have an impact on learning if we didn’t go with Washington’s spring break,” Osorio Garcia said.

But several teachers at the meeting did not feel the change would be in the best interest of all students.

Josh Linn, a teacher at Rocky Heights Elementary School, had also spoken at a previous meeting about his concerns with a schedule that didn’t align with the rest of the area’s school districts.

“The district reps say [the schedule] is good for kids,” he said after Monday’s meeting. “But only for high school sports kids. It doesn’t benefit the elementary schools. It screws up our testing schedule and it removes us from the community.”

Linn sent an open letter to the school board, listing several reasons that he

and other teachers were opposed to the change.

He said that elementary schools participate in state testing in April, and that having one fewer week to test would be difficult. He also said there are many activities in May, such as Outdoor School, that would make moving the test to during that month more difficult.

He added that having teachers in the Hermiston School District with children in other districts would make it more challenging for families to plan holidays or even school events.

“Some parents who work in districts around Hermiston will pull their children out of class during Oregon’s spring break to travel, potentially having kids out of school for two weeks right before state testing,” he said in the letter. “Or those parents will have to pay for people to take care of their kids while they work, shifting the cost of sports from those who choose to participate to those who do not.”

Rice said the council began looking at revising the schedule in October of 2017. She said they received feedback from representatives at each building, but there was no official survey of teachers before making the decision.

Linn said teachers had to seek out their building representatives to give them their input.

“The only teachers that ever got a say were the ed council,” he said.

Hermiston Athletics and Activities Director Larry Usher said in an email that last year, Hermiston had 734 total participants in its athletics program. But he said that the number did not include students that travel and compete in other activities, such as band and choir. He said with those students, he estimated there would be more than 900 students participating in school activities. He added that next year, the district anticipates a growing freshman class and an increase in the number of students that participate in athletics and activities.

“It should be noted that missed class time for our students is only part of the concern,” Usher said. “The missed class time for those teachers that also coach those sports that are traveling will impact an even greater number of students in our building.”

Linn said he planned to speak against the proposed change at the school board meeting on Feb. 12.

Contact Jayati Ramakrishnan at jramakrishnan@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4534

STUDENT OF THE WEEK

SPENCER WELLS

Senior – McLoughlin High School

Spencer Wells is a Senior at Mac-Hi. Spencer is part of our Mac-Hi Leadership and a 3 year lettermen in football and wrestling. He is a member of our Crimson and Black Honor Choir and 2017 prom and homecoming court. Spencer is active in his church youth group as well as a Eagle Scout. His parents are John and Amy Wells.

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