

PENDLETON

Altrusa warms up with sweet fundraiser

By **TAMMY MALGESINI**
East Oregonian

Area homeless students will benefit from a heart-warming fundraiser sponsored by Altrusa International of Pendleton.

Love Keeps Us Warm features desserts, door prizes, a no-host bar and live music with the Blue Wave Band from Seattle. The event is Saturday from 7-11 p.m. at Hamley Slickfork Saloon, 8 S.E. Court Ave., Pendleton. Tickets are \$25 each.

People are invited to kick up their heels — the band plays everything from old school and jazz to rock and Motown — while raising money for Altrusa's KARE (Kids At Risk Empowered) program. The project assists in meeting basic needs of homeless students in the Pendleton School District.

Indulge your taste buds with an Atomic Bomb Mousse Cake, three varieties of cheesecakes, marionberry and cherry pie, and French macaroons. Also, a buffet offers scoops of candy.

"Our main feature is dessert," said Debbie McBee, KARE co-chair. "But we'll also have cheese and crackers, fruit and other hors d'oeuvres."

KARE co-chair Karen Rose said McBee, who also serves on the school board, shared concerns about the number of homeless students in the district. In response, the Altrusans created KARE to help address student needs.

"It's shocking to me to have so many kids that are in such huge need of basic things," McBee said. "You can't focus on school stuff when you don't have a roof over your head or a bed to sleep in."

A lack of appropriate clothing or shelter, she said, makes it difficult for homeless students to attend school. Of the initial 91 identified, Rose said Altrusa focused on 30 with the greatest needs. As support for the program increases, they hope to provide help to additional homeless students.

While Altrusans aren't given their names, Rose said school counselors work with students to create a request list. Last spring, the average amount spent on each student was between \$200-\$300.



A six-piece group with the Blue Wave Band of Seattle will perform during Saturday's Love Keeps Us Warm fundraiser. Sponsored by Altrusa International of Pendleton, the event is raising money to help local homeless students.

Contributed photo

Clothing, shoes, hygiene products, school supplies, tents, tarps, blankets and more have been purchased for the needy students, Rose said. Also, Rose said they will provide cleats or other specialty shoes needed to participate in sports, dance or other activities. Being involved, she said, can increase their self-worth.

"We know that sports and activities are a good outlet," Rose said.

In addition to grants from the Wildhorse Foundation and the Altrusa International Foundation, Rose is appreciative of others getting involved with KARE. This spring, the Kiwanis are stepping up to assist with its Happy Feet project.

"They provide shoes to kids in need," Rose said. "We're really happy to have them on board."

Having the fundraiser near Valentine's Day serves a two-fold purpose.

In addition to offering couples an opportunity to go dancing, the nature of the holiday encourages sharing affection with others.

"We want these kids to feel loved," Rose said.

As of Monday, McBee said 40 tickets remain for the event. They are available at the Pendleton Chamber of Commerce, 501 S. Main St., Dave's Chevron, 220 S.W. 12th St., or by calling McBee. If available, tickets will be sold at the door.

Also, tax-deductible donations are welcome. For more information about KARE, contact Rose at 541-969-3587, k_rose1232@hotmail.com or McBee at 541-276-3796.

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

STANFIELD

Brick busters raise more than \$4K for girl with brain tumor

East Oregonian

Students and instructors of Eastern Oregon Family Taekwondo, Stanfield, broke more than 200 bricks Saturday on the way to raising \$4,451 to benefit an Echo girl with a brain tumor.

Erwin Watson, owner of the martial arts studio and business, said they also went through far more boards than bricks.

"We did it, and it was a team effort," Watson said.

His taekwondo students solicited donations of \$5 per board and \$10 per brick to help cover the medical costs of 11-year-old Maddy Thomas, who has pilocytic astrocytoma, a brain tumor. She had surgery in October to remove part of the tumor and is undergoing chemotherapy to shrink the rest.

Home Depot donated the boards and bricks, and Watson said the bricks provided quite the workout.

More online

For video of bricks and boards being busted visit eastoregonian.com

"The bricks were pretty hard," he said. "Harder than any I've ever broke before."

Watson also coped with a sore wrist, which he said he got from a knot in a board. Still, he joined his dozens of students, from children to adults, slamming their fists and elbows through the boards and bricks.

Watson's oldest son, Tyler Watson, also played a big role, at one point driving his elbow again and again through stacks of three bricks.

The senior Watson said the hard work — and soreness — were worth it, and he plans to soon present Maddy with the check. More donations also could come in, he said, so the final tally could be even larger.

PENDLETON

Chamber of commerce promotes Lauer to director

East Oregonian

The Pendleton Chamber of Commerce didn't go far to find its next executive director.

The chamber announced Monday that Megan Lauer, its membership coordinator since 2014, will be promoted to lead the local business organization as the interim executive director.

In a statement, chamber President Jordan McDonald said it made "great sense to promote from within."

"The truth is, we had a young MBA gaining experience in our office at a position she was already overqualified for, so it's a natural progression," he said. "Megan is a concise and confident businesswoman; I believe this will be a good move for the Chamber of Commerce."

Lauer has a bachelor's degree from the University

of Idaho and a master's of business administration from Willamette University. She's also active in Altrusa International of Pendleton, serving as the first vice president and the chair of the service committee.

"I am thrilled to continue working with our members in this new role," Lauer said in a statement "I love the work we do helping tourists and supporting local businesses."

In a Monday interview, McDonald said Lauer will continue to serve as membership coordinator while taking on executive director duties. As soon as she finds a replacement for the membership coordinator position, McDonald expects the interim tag to be lifted.

Lauer replaces Gail Nelson, who resigned after six years with the chamber to become Umatilla County's economic development and tourism coordinator



Lauer

BRIEFLY

I-84 overpass down to one lane following damage

BOARDMAN — An eastbound vehicle with too tall a load struck the underside of the overpass bridge on Interstate 84 at Boardman on Monday, prompting its closure and an inspection.

The Oregon Department of Transportation will open one lane on the overpass bridge at Exit 164.

The transportation agency advised drivers crossing over the freeway at the location to plan for delays and obey traffic control flaggers, who will control the flow 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

One of the eastbound freeway lanes is also closed to accommodate bridge inspection and repair work.

ODOT stated it expects the overpass and eastbound freeway lane restrictions to remain in place for one to two weeks.

Warmer winter weather continues

HERMISTON — Hermiston hit 63 on Sunday, tying a record high temperature from 2011, according to the National Weather Service. The temperature also was 18 degrees above the city's normal maximum.

Pendleton reached 60 on Sunday, no record but 15 degrees warmer than the normal maximum for the date.

The two towns also were almost 5 degrees warmer than usual for January, with the Round-Up City's mean temperature at 39.9 and Hermiston's at 39.6. Area highs remain in the 50s this week, with peaks in the lower 60s on Thursday.

The Weather Service also reported Pendleton and the surrounding areas have a possibility of rain, and the precipitation and warm weather means melting snow and ice will cause rivers and streams to rise through Monday. The Weather Service, however, has not issued flood warnings or advisories for Umatilla or Morrow counties.

This January also was far warmer than last year's, when Pendleton's mean was 22.5 and Hermiston's 21.4.



Photo courtesy ODOT

One lane of the overpass bridge at I-84 Exit 164 in Boardman will reopen after a vehicle with a tall load struck the bridge causing a closure and inspection.

Hermiston sophomore dies

HERMISTON — Counselors and a safe room were available to students at Hermiston High School Monday after the death of a student.

The Hermiston School District was notified Monday morning by the Hermiston Police Department of the death of Jenna Thomas, a sophomore and member of the high school's swim team, according to a news release from the district.

Members of the area crisis flight team that respond to schools during times of tragedy were on hand to help staff and students process the difficult news.

"The district asks for parent and community support by keeping an eye out for those students, or staff members, that may be struggling with the news," the district stated. "If a student is struggling with the news counselors are available to provide emotional support. We are heartbroken for the Thomas family. Our thoughts and prayers go out to them and friends and relatives of Jenna."

Public invited to meet new Lifeways director

PENDLETON — Tim Hoekstra, the new chief executive officer of Lifeways, Inc., will participate in a meet and greet in Pendleton.

The public is invited to the free event Wednesday from 5-6:30 p.m. at Lifeways, 331 S.E. Second St., Pendleton. Hoekstra

began overseeing the organization's services in Pendleton, Hermiston, Umatilla, Milton-Freewater and Ontario on Jan. 15.

His experience includes 28 years of providing executive leadership with healthcare operations and integrated physical and behavioral health services. Also, Hoekstra has served on numerous legislative committees regarding policies, rules and laws impacting communities and healthcare organizations.

Lifeways provides mental health services in Umatilla County and beyond. For more information, visit www.lifeways.org.



Bird club focuses on nesting boxes

PENDLETON — A pair of bird enthusiasts will discuss nesting boxes during the February Pendleton Bird Club meeting.

Anyone interested in birding is invited to attend the free event. Chris Hyland of Walla Walla will share about building and maintaining wood duck nest boxes and club member Jack Simons will talk about the features of a good nest box.

The gathering is Thursday at 7 p.m. at the First Christian Church, 215 N. Main St., Pendleton. Refreshments will be served.

For more information, contact lorawaltz@gmail.com or visit www.pendletonbirders.org.

Submit information to: community@eastoregonian.com or drop off to the attention of Tammy Malgesini at 333 E. Main St., Hermiston or Renee Struthers at 211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton. Call 541-564-4539 or 541-966-0818 with questions.

We're waiting for you at ...

Kick it Up After 5

Business After Hours Event

hosted by **EAST OREGONIAN**

211 SE Byers Ave. • Pendleton

Thursday, Feb. 8 • 5:30-7 p.m.

Watch the Press Run at 5:45 p.m.

Tour the Archive Room & "The Morgue"

Wine • Beer • Appetizers • Door Prizes • Networking

50/50 and Raffle Drawings

Chamber Members & the Public are welcome to attend this FREE event!

A program of the Pendleton Chamber Ambassadors

BOARDMAN

Teacher arrested for sexual abuse

East Oregonian

Windy River Elementary School sixth grade teacher Robert Weems was placed on leave the day before he was arrested on sexual abuse charges, the Morrow County School District announced Monday.

According to a press release, the district was "made aware of a poten-

tial situation regarding Weems" on Feb. 1 and immediately placed him

on leave. The following day, he was arrested by The Dalles Police Department on multiple counts of sexual abuse in the second degree and third degree and official misconduct.

Weems was hired to teach at the Boardman elementary school July 1.



Weems

WILDHORSE
RESORT & CASINO

2/5 - 2/6

Cineplex Show Times

\$5 Classic Movie
2/7 12:00 PM
Leave Her to Heaven

Winchester (PG13)
4:20 6:40 9:20

Hostiles (R)
4:00 6:50 9:40

Maze Runner: The Death Cure (PG13)
3:30* 6:30 9:30

12 Strong (R)
4:10 7:00 9:50

Jumanji 2D (PG13)
4:40 7:20 10:00

Credit & Debit Cards accepted
Cineplex gift cards available
*Matinee Pricing
wildhorseresort.com
541-966-1850
Pendleton, OR I-84 - Exit 216