

# Students compete for shot at state chess tournament

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN  
East Oregonian

A deafening silence settled over the Hermiston High School library as 20 kids stared at chess boards, plotting their next moves.

The Region 23/24 chess tournament drew elementary schoolers from Heppner, and middle and high schoolers from Hermiston, all who are trying to qualify for the state tournament. The tournament is March 9 and 10.

After a high-drama three-way tie for the top high school spot, all three students will move onto state. The winners were senior Gabriel Gomez and sophomores Isaac Bonifer and Jeremy Bowden. Each boy won four out of the five matches they played.

At the middle and elementary school level, the top five scorers will attend the state tournament as a team. The winners for the middle school level are Luke Gray, Zane Herron, Nathan Booher, Dillon Herron and Elijah Robinson.

The elementary school winners are Owen Guerra, Nicholas Wenberg, Claire Lindsay, Jaime Cavan, and John Lindsay and Maya Payne, who tied for the third-highest score.

As Hermiston High School sophomores Neveah Cubbage and Kylie Barker waited to start their



Two Hermiston High School students play a game of chess at Saturday's state-qualifying tournament.

Staff photo by Jayati Ramakrishnan

final round of the day, they reflected on their games so far. The biggest challenge, Cubbage said, is that with a fairly small group of people, they have to find new ways to beat the same opponents.

"If you play a lot of the same people, they know what your moves are, and they can figure out how to beat you," Barker said.

But both agreed that their favorite aspect has been meeting new people. The two became friends when they joined chess club several years ago.

Club advisor Delia Fields said there are anywhere between 30 and 40 people in chess club, encompassing all three secondary schools. The team practices twice a week, and students get the chance to play opponents of varying skill levels, and get assistance from adult volunteers.

Fields said the chess club received a boost this year, when it became an official "Chess for Success" team. Joining a group of schools all over Oregon and one in Washington, the organization

started in 1992 as a way to teach chess to at-risk youth, to help them develop critical thinking and problem solving skills.

"It's allowed us to go from a small, strong program to a larger strong program," Fields said. "The kids aren't hamstrung by registration fees."

A group of about 40 elementary schoolers from Heppner made the trip to Hermiston. The only elementary school in the area with a Chess for Success program, students have found a lot they like about the game.

"I like the 'touch-move' rule," said fifth-grader Jaime Cavan, noting a rule that if a player touches a piece, they have to move that piece. "Sometimes my opponent messes up."

Claire Lindsay, a third grader, said one of the challenges has been playing chess under pressure.

"When I went to state, it was really hard," she said. "I saw that I was going to be able to get a draw, but I didn't win," she said.

For some students, chess has quickly become a favorite pastime. Though they were done competing for the day, Luke Gray and Zane Herron, sixth graders at Armand Larive Middle School, sat with a chessboard outside the library and played a practice game.

Both had won four of their five tournaments.

"I just love to play chess," Gray said.

"It's a nice, relaxing game," Herron said. "It's a good way to free your mind and focus. I believe it makes you more self-aware."

Gray has been playing for several years, and learned from his father.

"My dad's a trucker. And when he was on the road, we would play online chess on chess.com," he said.

MaryAnn Elgueabal, the Heppner chess coach, said many of her students come in with little to no chess experience. The Chess for Success program provides lesson plans, and she relies on volunteers to help teach.

Both Elgueabal and Fields said they have seen changes in their students outside of the chess game.

"We're a safe landing place," Fields said. "They learn social skills, real thoughtful and purposeful actions."

Elgueabal said she has seen an improvement in patience and manners from many students.

"They learn that everything you do has a consequence," she said. "Once you've moved that chess piece, it's moved."

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## Program would expand UAS operations

East Oregonian

The Oregon Department of Aviation has applied for a program that would allow its three unmanned aerial systems ranges — Pendleton, Tillamook and Warm Springs — to work with private drone companies on more advanced operations.

According to a department press release, inclusion in the Federal Aviation Administration's UAS Integration Pilot Program will allow test ranges to work with drone companies to complete procedures like operations at night, flights over people, automated flights, and flights that are beyond the line of sight of the remote pilots.

As these companies develop applications like drone delivery, search and rescue operations, wildlife

surveys, and accident scene reconstruction, the FAA will continue to receive data that it will use for the eventual integration of UAS into the national airspace.

"The state of Oregon has been a leader in the field of unmanned aircraft," department Director Mitch Swecker said. "The state has been at the forefront of creating balanced UAS legislation, and has created an environment that attracts UAS businesses to Oregon. The three established UAS test ranges are a testament to Oregon's commitment. That means jobs and economic development throughout our state."

Steve Chrisman, Pendleton's economic development director and airport manager, said the Pendleton UAS Range had been independently

working on an application for the program. But when range officials realized that many of the program's operational benefits were things the range was already working on, they dropped their application and threw their support behind the state.

Chrisman said the program could eventually result in more business for all three test ranges, but they'll have to wait to see how the application process works out.

The press release states that the department is working with Intel, Insitu, Skyward, Oregon State University and other industry members to develop a framework that would integrate an electronic license plate system for drones with an automated state-wide air traffic control system.

## Trials underway for armed robbery defendants

By PHIL WRIGHT  
East Oregonian

The Morrow County trial for armed robbery defendant Daniel Faustino Arce of Portland stretches into its fourth day Tuesday. And the trial for co-defendant Desirea Devin of Heppner begins Wednesday.

District Attorney Justin Nelson said jury selection last week for Arce's trial took one day and not just a few hours, and what was planned as a two-day trial has doubled. He said the same situation could happen with the Devin case.

Arce, 29, and Devin, 23, face charges of robbery,

burglary, theft, and more, including unlawful use of a weapon and attempted arson. The state accused them of committing the crimes Dec. 17 in southern Morrow County and firing a gun at one victim. Bird hunters pinned down the pair when they tried to set fire to the vehicle they stole, according to court records, which led to their arrests.

Devin's attorney, Robert Klahn of Pendleton, has filed a motion to suppress her statements after she told a deputy she wanted a lawyer. In response, Nelson is asking the court to strike the suppression motion or

to continue the trial because Klahn did not follow court filing deadlines. Circuit Judge Daniel Hill will hear arguments on the matter Tuesday morning.

The case has a third defendant — Vera Rose Smith, 35, of Warm Springs. She faces charges of first- and second degree burglary, unauthorized use of a vehicle, first-degree theft. Nelson said her charges are different from Arce and Devin's because Smith was involved at the start of the crimes and soon left. Her trial begins Feb. 20.

All three defendants remain in the Umatilla County Jail, Pendleton.

### BRIEFLY

#### Irrigon man injured in hit-and-run

An Irrigon man was injured in a hit-and-run Saturday, and the Morrow County Sheriff's Office is still looking for the offender.

Around 3:30 p.m., pedestrian Miguel Angel Gutierrez, 46, was hit by a vehicle on Southeast Division Road in Irrigon. The vehicle immediately left the scene. According to Melissa Ross of the sheriff's office, Gutierrez was bleeding from the head, but there are no further updates on his injuries.

Ross said there was a witness to the incident, but she did not have the person's name. She said the investigation is ongoing.

#### Heppner Fit Park underway

HEPPNER — Heppner residents will soon have a new place to exercise in the great outdoors. The Port of Morrow on Friday broke ground on the "Fit Park" on Riverside Avenue in Heppner. The park, scheduled to be completed in May 2018, will have a variety of exercise gear such as circuit training equipment.

It will have a grassy area for multi-sport use, a stage, public restrooms, and badminton and pickle ball courts. The park is a little over 1.5 acres, and is located next to the Willow Creek Water Park.

Kim Cutsforth, former Heppner city manager and Morrow County administrator, said the park cost \$325,000 with a variety of grants and donations, from groups such as the Wildhorse Foundation and the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department. The park is the result of a combined effort of the Willow Creek Park District, Heppner High School, Morrow County, the Port of Morrow and the Howard and Beth Bryant Foundation, of which Cutsforth is the director.

Cutsforth said planning for the park began in summer of 2016.

#### Irrigon chamber to discuss plans

IRRIGON — A round-table discussion is planned during the upcoming Irrigon Chamber of Commerce meeting.

The no-host luncheon gathering is Wednesday

at noon at Stokes Landing Senior Center, 150 Columbia Lane, Irrigon. The cost is \$8 for members and \$10 for non-members. The discussion will focus on the future of the Irrigon chamber.

Also, people are encouraged to save the date for "Time to Shine," the community's citizen recognition event. Additional details will be announced.

For more information, contact Tracey Johnson at [irrigonchamber@irrigonchamber.com](mailto:irrigonchamber@irrigonchamber.com), 541-922-6259 or visit [www.irrigonchamber.net](http://www.irrigonchamber.net).

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## PUBLIC SAFETY LOG

### FRIDAY

10:41 a.m. - A Hermiston woman told police she cannot keep her dog right now, so a friend has the pet, but he has been neglecting her dog, which is now "skin and bones." She also said her friend gave her 72 hours to get the dog back.

11:30 a.m. - A caller at the Heppner Elk's Lodge, 142 N. Main St., reported someone assaulted her son.

12:15 p.m. - Pendleton police responded to a 911 report on Northwest B Place of a man assaulting another male. The suspect was gone when police arrived.

2:07 p.m. - A Milton-Freewater caller reported the theft of an electric bicycle motor from a vehicle on the 100 block of South Russell Street.

7:54 p.m. - Pendleton police took a report of an assault at Southwest Eighth Street and Isaac Avenue.

### SATURDAY

3:57 a.m. - Pendleton police responded to Brooke RV Park, 5 N.E. Eighth St., on a report of a prowler but did not find anyone.

11:43 a.m. - An Irrigon resident reported her brother was trying to hit a female. The Morrow County Sheriff's Office sent a deputy, who spoke with the people involved.

3:26 p.m. - Morrow County emergency services responded to Southeast Division Street, Irrigon, after a vehicle hit a man. An ambulance took the patient to a hospital.

5:28 p.m. - Hermiston police responded to a burglary report on the 1100 block of South First Street.

6:01 p.m. - Pilot Rock police dealt with a dog issue on Northwest Alder Drive.

### SUNDAY

8:01 a.m. - Pendleton police took a report for a burglary at the Red Lion Hotel, 304 S.E. Nye Ave.

12:35 p.m. - A caller reported a neglected cow in the pasture behind the motor home right after the curve on Tum A Lum Road near Stateline Road, Milton-Freewater.

6:03 p.m. - An Irrigon caller asked the Morrow County Sheriff's Office to send someone to get four puppies. The pups may belong to a neighbor, she said, but no one would answer their door. The Morrow County Sheriff's Office took them to Pet Rescue-Humane Society Eastern Oregon.

7:10 p.m. - A Hermiston-area woman told the Umatilla County Sheriff's Office she is going through a divorce and put a lock on her bedroom door, but her soon-to-be-ex husband kicked in the door. The sheriff's office determined this was a civil matter, not criminal.

7:25 p.m. - A resident on Dark Canyon Avenue, Umatilla, prompted a call to police when he threw things from his garage into the middle of the street. The caller said the man has made trouble before.

### ARRESTS, CITATIONS

#### Friday

•Morrow County Sheriff's Office arrested Krisiti Marie Worden, 36, of Heppner, for driving under the influence of intoxicants (alcohol), reckless driving and nine counts of reckless endangerment

•Morrow County Sheriff's Office arrested Eric Michael Masterson, 26, of Heppner, for DUII following a single-vehicle crash at about 6 p.m. on Willow Creek Road, Heppner, about half a mile south of Blake's Ranch.

•Pendleton police arrested John T. Marquez, 35, Pendleton, for DUII.

•Stanfield police arrested Jose Lewis Cerda, 34, of Stanfield, for tampering with physical evidence, second-degree theft and possession of methamphetamine.

•Pendleton police arrested Jesus Bueno Jr., 55, no address provided, for hindering prosecution.

#### Saturday

•Pendleton police arrested Delise R. Guerrero, 35, Pendleton, for DUII.

•Hermiston police arrested Mitchell Wayne Thomas, 28, of Hermiston, for violating parole and felon in possession of a weapon.

#### Sunday

•Oregon State Police at 2:39 a.m. responded to Interstate 84 near eastbound milepost 241 for a crash between a Toyota Corolla and a semi-trailer. The trooper arrested the driver of the Toyota, Antonio Guerrero, 32, of Hermiston, for DUII, and took him to the Umatilla County Jail, Pendleton, where he gave a breath test that showed a blood-alcohol content of .21 percent, almost three times the legal limit of .08 percent.

•Pendleton police arrested James C. Hassler, 27, of Amarillo, Texas, for DUII.

•Morrow County Sheriff's Office arrested Drion Mark Donner, 28, no address provided, for first-degree burglary, second-degree mischief and resisting arrest.

•Pendleton police arrested Mary Irene Perry, 35, of Pendleton, for felony DUII following a the rollover of an SUV a little after 4 p.m. on the 1200 block of Tutuilla Creek Road.

•Umatilla County Sheriff's Office arrested Timothy Merrill Leischner, 35, of Pilot Rock, for first-degree assault, third-degree assault, reckless endangering, menacing and harassment.

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