

MILTON-FREEWATER

# Doherty, Spiesses named Golden Pioneers

Tucker, Mitchell win man, woman of the year awards

By MARCIA AKES for the East Oregonian

A glowing moon, twinkling stars, bouquets of flowers, and even a gigantic rocket ship graced the tables at the 70th Annual Milton-Freewater Area Chamber of Commerce Awards Banquet held Friday at the Community Building.

Golden Pioneer Awards were given to Nancy Doherty and Dick and Loretta Spiess.

Doherty was a teacher for more than 30 years. Along with community service, she has donated countless hours visiting nursing homes and helping with Special Olympics. She also spearheaded the restoration and maintenance of the Old Pioneer Cemetery. In accepting the award, Doherty advised to get children involved in community service and they will take ownership in the community.

In 1962, the Spiess family took over operation of the M-F Drive-In Theater. In 1973, Dick and Loretta Spiess established the Burger Hut on South Main Street. The couple have always been huge supporters of area youths, giving many of them their first paycheck.

In 2004, a windstorm basically destroyed the outdoor theater. Dick heard from numerous people worried if the beloved landmark would be rebuilt. He took out a sizable loan to cover what the insurance didn't and granted the community its wish. The drive-in theater, one of only three left in Oregon, shows new release movies that are family-friendly.

Sam Tucker was named the 2017 Man of the Year. In introducing Tucker, last year's winner Jim Stanton



Doherty



Loretta Spiess



Dick Spiess



Tucker



Mitchell



Brown



Yensen



Ambler



Key



Nyburg

said Tucker is someone who goes the extra mile, is admired by his peer group, is a dedicated family man, donates countless hours to the community and has a great sense of humor.

"I'm humbled beyond belief for this honor," Tucker said. "I get more than I give from this community."

Woman of the Year Jean Ann Mitchell was described as attending almost all community meetings, suggests and then works on community improvement projects, and has a passion for art. Judy Chestnut, last year's honoree, said Mitchell has a big heart and is the driving force in the annual Harvest Time Fine Art Show

"I can't believe this. I wrote a support letter for someone else," said a surprised Mitchell. "This is a great community to be part of. This is home. Thank you for letting me serve you."

Junior Citizen was awarded to Andrew Brown; acknowledging his ability to make a difference to every person he comes in contact with. As the 2017 chamber president, he helped the chamber move forward and advocated for the community and businesses.

"I love this community and want to see great things from it," Brown said.

McLoughlin High School senior McKeena Yensen was Youth of the Year. The 3.9 GPA student is active in her church, 4-H, FFA, sports and continually helps with community service projects. Words describing the young woman included driven, kind, focused, caring, community minded, always willing to help and respects everyone's opinions.

Educator of the Year went to Chip Ambler, a teacher, coach, mentor and leader in the local school district for nearly 30 years. Recognized as a great role model, he was praised for his professionalism and setting high standards for his students. In addition, he has a positive influence in the lives of every child and a unique way to make each student feel valued.

For the current chamber leaders, masters of ceremonies Aaron and Katie Duff introduced Joel Smith of Gordy Plastics as the 2018 president, Cindy Timmons of Oregon State University Extension Services as president-elect, and the new chamber executive director Jennifer Konrad.

Gary Key was named Agriculturalist. From a pile of support letters, it was explained that Key was always one of the first to experiment with new technique to improve yields and preserve our delicate soils and precious water. Another stated he was always there to help fellow farmers with advice and a helping hand. And it was emphasized that his life is guided by "his faith, his family and his farm."

Saager's Shoe Shop earned the Business Award. Bill Saager started the shoe business in 1914 in old Freewater with deeply forged principles of integrity, quality, fair pricing and customer service. His son, Herb Saager, took over the store in 1955. After 104 years, it remains in the family with Bill's grandson, Ron Saager, and great-granddaughter, Deidre Nyburg, now at the helm.

Julie Culjak was recognized with the President's Award; which is given to someone who has helped the chamber over the year.

Blue Mountain Community College Milton-Freewater Center was voted Best Decorated Table by those in attendance.

HERMISTON

# Police search for suspect who left ID after chase, fleeing

East Oregonian

HERMISTON — The Hermiston Police Department took to Facebook to call out its suspect in a Monday morning motorcycle chase.

The pursuit began around 9:45 a.m. when an officer tried stopping a blue Honda Goldwing because the registration expired in 2016. The officer turned on his police car's overhead lights, according to a statement from Hermiston police Lt. Randy Studebaker, and the motorcyclists led police on a ride that "went out into the county and all over the south side of town."

Speeds through some city streets reached 55 mph, and out on Westland Road the top speed was about 80 mph. Studebaker said traffic was light, and police constantly evaluate the conditions of a chase.

The rider ditched the bike around 10 a.m. on the 1300 block of Southeast Ninth Street near East Evelyn Avenue and fled on foot. Police impounded the Honda but did not catch the rider.

Studebaker around 12:30 p.m. took to Facebook to report officers

have a good idea who was highlighting it on the Honda: Corey Timothy Gray, 40 of Heppner.

Studebaker explained police suspect Gray because officer found his identification in a wallet on the motorcycle "along with a small amount of what we suspect to be controlled substance," and the rider left the motorcycle near the home of someone police



Gray

think is one of Gray's associates. Plenty of officers also saw the rider and bike.

"The cyclist's helmet did not cover his whole face," Studebaker stated in the post addressed to Gray, "and we feel he bore a striking resemblance to you. ... Weird, huh?"

Studebaker invited Gray to come on into the police station to talk about the case. Studebaker also stated he attached a jail mug shot of Gray "so there's no doubt who I'm trying to reach."

Gray has not checked in with his probation officer, according to Studebaker, and Hermiston police would be happy to help him with that as well.

The Facebook approach might seem silly, but Studebaker said the last time he tried this tactic, it work.

BOARDMAN

# Morrow County lawmen save two local men from sinking boat on Columbia

East Oregonian

BOARDMAN — Waves topping 6 feet did not deter the Morrow County Sheriff's Office from rescuing two local men from the Columbia River.

Undersheriff John A. Bowles reported the sheriff's office Saturday at 11:58 a.m. received a 911 transfer call from the Umatilla County Sheriff's Office about a Sea Ray boat sinking on the Columbia River between Tower Road and the Boardman Marina with two men aboard.

"The information was two males were on the boat, but it was going down and they could not hold on much longer," according to Bowles.

Law enforcement from the sheriff's office, Boardman Police Department and Oregon State Police responded, along with the ambulance from Boardman.

Officers at 12:18 p.m. spotted the sinking boat from Interstate 84 near milepost 159 west of Boardman.

Morrow County marine and patrol Sgt. Randy Rayburn and Cpl. Ryan Jundt at 12:36 p.m. headed out in a boat with emergency technicians on board.

Boardman police chief Rick Stokoe responded in

his personal boat to assist if needed.

"The weather was cold and windy," Bowles reported, "with 6 foot rollers and white caps, making for a difficult and risky rescue."

Rayburn after about 20 minutes spotted two men standing on what was left of the sinking boat. He and Jundt rescued Wyatt Hayden of Pilot Rock and Wyatt Morris of Adams and brought them safe to the Boardman Marina. Medics evaluated the two and released safe and in good health.

Bowles stated the rescue was exemplary of public service and local agencies working together to get the job done.

STANFIELD

# Dehydration plant catches fire again

Firefighters have busy few days in Hermiston area

By JADE MCDOWELL for the East Oregonian

The 3D Idapro Solutions dehydration plant in Stanfield caught fire again on Monday.

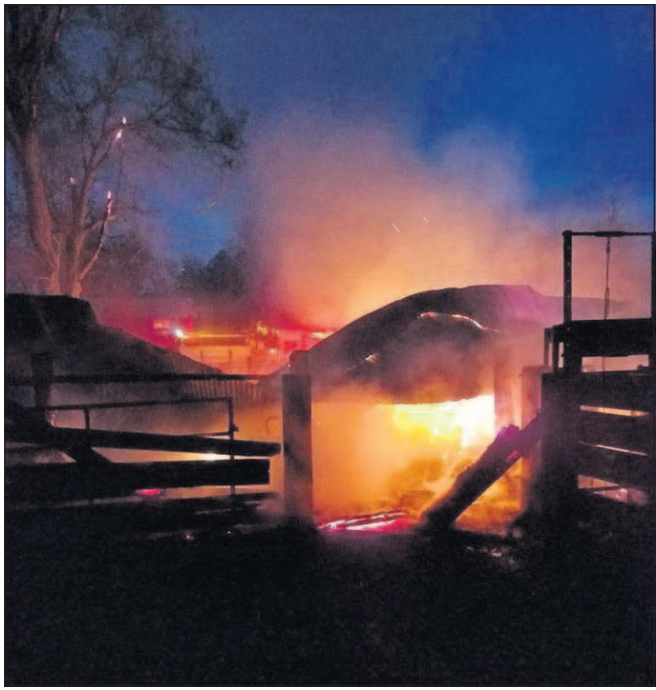
The fire — one of at least four at the plant in about a year — started in the scrubber unit, which is used to mitigate odors.

"It was exactly where the fire was last time," said Scott Stanton, chief of Umatilla County Fire District 1.

The fire district responded to a call at 11:38 a.m. and personnel were on scene until about 2 p.m. Stanton said the damage was mostly kept to the scrubber area and no one was injured. He said the cause was not yet confirmed but was possibly related to some maintenance work taking place on Monday.

The plant's first scrubber unit burned up in February 2017. The company brought in a new scrubber — which representatives later admitted was undersized for the plant — and experienced two more fires in June and July 2017. One worker was injured in the July fire, caused by an explosion in the bag house.

3D Idapro Solutions purchased the plant on Hoosier Lane in the summer of 2016 to use for dehy-



Contributed photo

Umatilla County Fire District 1 responded to multiple fires over the past three days, including this barn fire in the 33000 block of Punkin Center outside Hermiston early Sunday morning.

drating potato products used in dog food. After the fire last February, Stanfield residents began complaining to the city council that a strong rotten smell, described as "vomit" and "dead flesh" were keeping them indoors and causing them to retch and gag.

The company promised to install a new scrubber in the fall of 2017 that would better capture odors, and also took other mitigation steps such as re-routing trucks and grading the site so that potato product did not spill out of trucks.

The company did not respond to a request for comment by press time Monday.

Weekend fires

The fire in Stanfield on Monday added to what had been a busy weekend for UCFD1. On Saturday evening about 8:40 p.m. the district responded to a house fire in the 300 block of Southeast 9th Street in Hermiston.

Stanton said a wood stove chimney caught the roof on fire. While the roof had substantial damage, Stanton said the rest of the

home was able to be saved in part because of a fast-acting neighbor who called 9-1-1 immediately, and the homeowner who used a garden hose on the roof while waiting for fire trucks to arrive.

A caller had reported another roof fire earlier in the day, about 3 p.m., but that one turned out to be a false alarm. Stanton said the fire district was conducting a flammable liquids training in the Hermiston High School parking lot and someone had mistaken the "large" flames that were part of the training for a building with its roof on fire.

UCFD1 also put out a barn fire in the 33000 block of Punkin Center outside Hermiston early Sunday morning. Stanton said the cause of the fire was still under investigation as of Monday afternoon, but by the time the department was called out at 5:58 a.m. the metal roof of the barn had already collapsed.

"It had been going for a while," he said.

The department also responded to four motor vehicle crashes over the weekend, including a semi-truck that tipped over near exit 188 on Interstate 84. The driver was transported by ambulance to the hospital.

"It kept us pretty busy," Stanton said of the weekend.

Contact Jade McDowell at [jmcdowell@eastoregonian.com](mailto:jmcdowell@eastoregonian.com) or 541-564-4536.

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