

HERMISTON

# The youngest protester

Lone Sunset Elementary student walked out of school

By JADE MCDOWELL  
East Oregonian

The night before students walked out of schools around the country in protest of school violence, Alondra Cadenas got out her markers and started making signs.

“On Valentine’s Day in Florida all these kids died because they thought they were safe at school,” the fifth-grader wrote before carefully copying down the names of all 17 people — including 14 children — who died in the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooting.

A second sign said “Hey adults! It’s time to stop school shootings.” But no one was there to help her hold it. Although one of her friends had planned to join her, in the end Alondra was the only student to walk out of Sunset Elementary School in Hermiston on Wednesday.

“I stood out there so maybe the adults would notice and do something about gun violence,” she said.

The national protest called for students to walk out at 10 a.m. and stay for 17 minutes — one minute for each of the victims memorialized on Alondra’s sign.

“I just went to my backpack and grabbed my phone and my poster and walked out of the room,” she said.

When she was stopped by a teacher she thought she



Alondra Cadenas shows off the sign she made to hold up during her 17-minute walkout at Sunset Elementary School on Wednesday.

Staff photo by Jade McDowell

might be sent back to class, but she says the teacher merely redirected her toward the front door instead of the back so that the office staff could keep an eye on her while she stood outside with her sign, using her phone as a timer. Three different adults noticed her in front of the school and asked her about her protest.

“It felt good,” she said.

Alondra’s mother Norma Regalado said she was proud of her daughter for being brave enough to walk out all by herself. She said she had discussed the Florida shooting and news of the planned protest with her children (her son Saul Cadenas, a freshman at Hermiston High

School, also participated in the walkout) but in the end it was up to them whether they wanted to participate.

She said she thought it was unfair for adults sitting safely at home to say all of the kids participating just wanted to get out of class.

“I think most kids are aware of that, that someone could just walk in and start shooting that,” she said, noting that’s not something she worried about when she was that age.

Saul said he did know kids who had used the walkout as an excuse to skip class, but he and his sister and many others at the high school walked out because they wanted to call more attention to the

spreading problem of school shootings.

Regalado said it’s not just children who are scared — as a parent it can also be terrifying to send your children off to school after the news of the latest school shooting. Amid a flurry of recent reports in the area of students making threats she kept her children home one day because she just couldn’t face sending them off.

As for Alondra, the elementary schooler said she didn’t have specific laws she was hoping got passed as a result of the walkout, but she hoped the adults did.

“I hope that gun violence ends and stuff and the adults might notice,” she said.

## Noise still a concern for EOTEC neighbors

By JADE MCDOWELL  
East Oregonian

Now that the city of Hermiston has taken full ownership of the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center, it will also take on the responsibility of responding to complaints about the facility.

There have been plenty from neighbors, some of whom formed the Hermiston Airport Road Neighborhood Association last year when the county was considering changing the name of the road to make it easier to find EOTEC. They won a partial victory — the county decided to put off the decision until after the road has been improved using transportation package dollars from the state.

Last spring some of the 34 neighbors (representing 17 addresses) also complained during a board of county commissioners meeting about bass-heavy music blasting from the event center until midnight or later during events, about partygoers who drive recklessly or trespass on private property after events break up, and about traffic and dust problems generated by EOTEC.

HARNA president Chris Weine said in the last year response to his complaints has been a mixed bag, with noise still a major concern

but dust issues getting better. He said he and neighbor Mariah Murray met with city manager Byron Smith two weeks ago about a request they have made for the city to update its noise ordinance.

Noise has been the main complaint of property owners near the event center. Weine said people on social media have made comments about not being supportive of the fair and rodeo, saying neighbors of the old fairgrounds dealt with similar issues for decades. But he said the neighbors are willing to put up with noise during fair and rodeo week for the sake of supporting those events — it’s the weddings and quinceañeras blasting music until midnight on other week-ends that concerns them.

“We’ve been dealing with this for over two years and we’ve still made no progress today from where we were two years ago,” he said.

Weine said the city’s noise ordinance measures dBA, which measures decibel levels for mid-range frequencies, instead of dBC, which measures decibel levels for high and low frequencies. As a result, he said, police can come out and take dBA readings during a party and find they don’t violate the noise ordinance even though neighbors are being kept awake by pounding bass.

Wayne wants the city to adopt an ordinance similar to Pendleton’s, which states the operation of sound-producing devices such as radios “between the hours of 11 p.m. and 7 a.m., so that it is plainly audible at a distance of 50 feet from the building, structure, vehicle, or place in which it is located” is a violation of the nuisance ordinance, as is action to “make, continue, or cause to be made or continued any loud, unnecessary or unusual noise nor any noise, which annoys, disturbs, injures or endangers the comfort, repose, health, peace or safety of others, within or over the limits of the city.”

However, he said Smith has so far declined to bring the issue before the city council.

Smith said Tuesday that he hadn’t closed the door on that option, but was still having the city’s attorney research the legal issues surrounding noise ordinances and enforcement before deciding how to move forward with HARNA’s concerns.

One request that has been made in the past is to shut down events at 10 p.m., but Smith said the city believes the earlier deadline would hamper EOTEC’s ability to attract events.

In January the event-management company

VenuWorks was hired to run EOTEC’s day-to-day operations. Al Davis now serves as general manager. Smith said as the city partners with VenuWorks on policies and planning, issues like noise control will be part of the conversation. He said trees planted and growing to maturity should help as well.

“We’re going to do the best we can with operating an entertainment facility,” he said. “We try to have as little impact on the neighborhood as possible, but it is a big change for that neighborhood.”

## Climate change group to discuss Juneau Icefield

PENDLETON — The Eastern Oregon Climate Change Coalition looks to engage people in discussions about climate change.

Philip Schmitz, a physics and geology professor at Blue Mountain Community College, will discuss information about time he spent with the Juneau Icefield Research Program during the upcoming 3rd Tuesday Climate Conversation. The no-host gathering is Tuesday, March 20 at noon at Prodigal Son Brewery & Pub, 230 S.E. Court Ave., Pendleton.

Schmitz will share about the program, which takes

## Williams appointed to Echo city council

By JADE MCDOWELL  
East Oregonian

Echo has a new city councilor after a busy council meeting.

Tammie Williams was appointed to the council Thursday to replace Lou Nakapalau, who resigned in January. She was chosen out of a field of four applicants, which also included Chad Ray, Carol Neely and Mel Wagner.

Williams has lived in Echo 33 years, and said she loves the small community that feels like “a big family.” She is a small business owner and said she has served in a number of public positions through the years, including Echo’s budget committee and the Umatilla County Planning Commission.

“I enjoy doing things for the community,” she said. “It’s just nice to feel like I’m doing something good. I just try to honor what the people want.”

She will be up for election in November.

Appointment of a new city councilor was one of several items on the agenda Thursday evening. The council also discussed a petition by resident Vera Burres to Kayak Public Transit, asking for a bus to stop in Echo. Kent and Laura Madison, who delivered Burres’s petition, said that Kayak administrators seemed open to the idea but would want to see evidence from a more detailed survey that people would actually ride the bus on a regular basis. The council voted to send a survey in the next city newsletter and make copies available at city hall for people who would ride but live outside city limits.

The Madisons were present at Thursday’s meeting to hand over a rough draft of an application to annex a portion of land along Thielsen Road between Echo and the Interstate 84 interchange. They hope to create a development in the area north of Echo that would include a hotel, RV park and industrial and commercial projects. He said Thursday that one reason it was a draft and not a final application is he wasn’t planning to add housing to the development, but would be open to applying for some

residential zoning along Bowman Road if that’s what the city preferred.

The Madisons proposed holding a community open house sometime in April to go over what the development might look like and take input from the community. Kent said they did not currently own the land but had an option to buy as soon as the community indicated it would support a development. He also said there were people who have already expressed interest in joining the project if it went forward.

On Thursday the council discussed progress on the city’s wastewater project. The city currently empties treated water into the Umatilla River but the Department of Environmental Quality has said they must find a new solution. The city has since come up with a plan to use an evaporator to get rid of about half the water and send the rest to the city of Stanfield, but city administrator Diane Berry said they lack the funds to move onto the final design phase of the project and build it.

She said in April the state’s regional solutions office will host a “one-stop” for Echo leaders to learn about all the different options to apply for funding.

“I’ve been told private foundations want to hear your heart and soul and tears and government organizations just want the nuts and bolts and leave out the drama,” Berry said.

The council also heard from the Pioneer Humane Society, which is pursuing a taxing district for county-wide animal control and needed the city to sign off on letting it appear on the ballot in Echo.

Ben DeCarlow, a member of the nonprofit’s board, said the organization provides services to residents all over the county, including a pet food assistance program, spay and neuter program and a shelter in Pendleton that has taken in and then adopted out about 5,000 animals in the past five years. He said the special taxing district with a rate of 10 cents per \$1,000 assessed value would allow the nonprofit to increase its staffing beyond three part-time staff.

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Tomb Raider (PG13)  
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A Wrinkle in Time (PG)  
11:40\* 4:40 7:10 2:10\* 9:40

The Hurricane Heist (PG13)  
12:00\* 2:30\* 5:00 7:30 10:10

Death Wish (R)  
11:50\* 2:20\* 4:50 7:20 9:50

Black Panther (PG13)  
1:00\* 4:00 7:00 10:00

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