



PENDLETON SOFTBALL, PILOT ROCK
BASEBALL, SOFTBALL TO PLAY FOR TITLES
SPORTS/1B

EAST OREGONIAN
WEDNESDAY, MAY 30, 2018

142nd Year, No. 159 WINNER OF THE 2017 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD One dollar

Vaccine
exemptions
in Oregon
at new high

By PARIS ACHEN
Capital Bureau

PORTLAND — Despite a 2013 law aimed at boosting immunization rates, the statewide rate for nonmedical exemptions to mandatory kindergarten vaccinations hit a record high this school year, according to the Oregon Health Authority.

The nonmedical exemption rate rose to 7.5 percent this year, higher than the 7 percent rate during the 2013-2014 school year when the law was passed to address declining vaccination rates among the state's nearly 700,000 schoolchildren.

Healthcare providers play a crucial role in educating parents about the need for vaccinations, said Stacy de Assis Matthews, immunization law coordinator for the health authority's Oregon Immunization Program.

Yet education efforts face a daunting popular culture belief that immunizations can cause autism and other problems.

The 2013 law — which required parents to jump through more hoops to obtain a nonmedical exemption — initially decreased the nonmedical exemption rate from 7 percent to 5.8 percent in 2015.

But the following year, the rate began to climb again, first to 6.2 percent in 2016, then to 6.5 percent in 2017 and finally, to 7.5 percent this year.

Nonmedical exemption rates for students in grades K-12 this year ranged from a low of 1 percent in Morrow County to a high of 10 percent in Josephine County.

Individual Oregon school and child care rates are available on OHA's School Immunization Coverage.

"While more nonmedical exemptions mean fewer children are being immunized, the vast majority of Oregon parents and guardians still choose to fully immunize their children," de Assis Matthews said. "Most parents and guardians know that immunization is still the best way to protect children

See VACCINE/6A

Oasis in a book desert



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

A group of seven Umatilla High School sophomores, Darian Smith, Mark Quinonez, Courtney Daniel, Natalie Soto, Makayla Chewning, Samantha Farrester and Andrea Hernandez, decided to collect book donations to fill two little libraries they will

Umatilla teens take
on projects to boost
literacy in community

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
East Oregonian

Summer is just around the corner, but that doesn't mean it's time to put the books away.

Several local organizations are offering ways for kids and adults to keep reading throughout the summer, whether with book clubs or reading challenges.

A group of students at Umatilla High School are hoping to get the youngest community members excited about reading by putting up two "little libraries" in city parks.

Seven sophomores in UHS' Language Arts 2 Honors class came up with the idea after their teacher, Alexa Lougee, taught them about "book deserts" and the lack of reading opportunities in areas affected by poverty.

"We learned that Umatilla happens to be the ninth-poorest city in Oregon," said student Courtney Daniel.

The students wrote an essay, but Lougee encouraged each group to turn their essay into

a hands-on project. One group decided to install two little libraries, public access boxes that store dozens of books. People can take out a book from the box for free, and are encouraged to replace it with a book they've already finished.

"We proposed the little libraries to give books to kids whose parents can't afford it, or whose parents can't take them to the library," Daniel said.

The students are constructing the boxes themselves out of old newsstands, and got permission from the city to install boxes in Kiwanis Park and Nugent Park. They hope to have the boxes

More inside

East Oregonian staff recommend summer reads, Page 4A.

completed and installed before the school year ends.

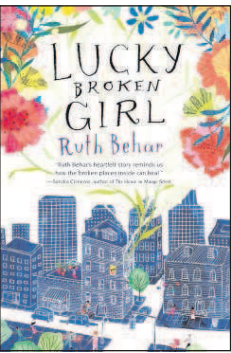
Students have also been advertising throughout the community to collect book donations. So far they've received about 100, ranging from children's books to novels for adults, and in both English and Spanish.

Daniel said they've received a lot of positive feedback.

"A lot of people, especially elementary schoolers, are excited

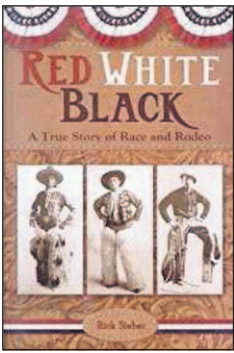
See LITERACY/6A

To-Read List



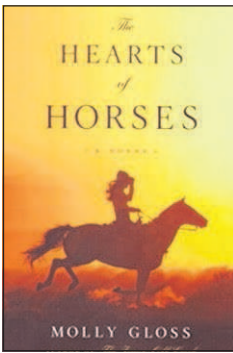
Penguin Group

Delia Fields, Hermiston: "Lucky Broken Girl" by Ruth Behar. Ruthie Mizrahi is a fifth-grader and newly arrived to the U.S. from Cuba in the 1960s, and confined to a full-body cast after an accident. Surrounded by her Cuban-Jewish family and a diverse group of neighbors, Ruthie finds strength and courage.



Bonanza Publishing

Jesus Rome, Hermiston: "Red White Black: A True Story of Race and Rodeo" by Rick Steber. I enjoyed it. First off, it's a local story, and just talks about aspects of our community, and diversity. It highlights the obstacles of Native Americans, blacks and whites. And, it's a true story of rodeo.



Houghton Mifflin Harcourt

Bette Husted, Pendleton: One I would really like to recommend is "Hearts of Horses" by Molly Gloss. It's set in an imaginary county in Eastern Oregon, similar to Wallowa County. It's a marvelous book. It gets the people right, and it gets the horses right.

PENDLETON

Grant-winning culinary arts teacher resigns

Previously a chef, Kristin Swaggart developed school's award-winning program

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

A popular culinary arts teacher at Pendleton High School will leave the district at the end of the school year.

Pendleton School District Superintendent Chris Fritsch said Kristin Swaggart recently submitted her

resignation letter, ending a four-year tenure that saw her significantly raise the profile of the high school's culinary arts program.

Fritsch said Swaggart was vague about why she is leaving in her resignation letter, but she struck a positive tone. The district has posted an ad for a new culinary arts teacher.

"It's going to be hard to replace her," he said.

When Swaggart was hired as a teacher in 2014, it was already the second time she had made a major career change.

She was a stay-at-home mom when her infant son began having

severe allergic reactions to certain foods, spurring her to start cooking all her home meals from scratch.

Her son's allergies cleared up but her passion for gourmet cooking remained, leading her to go back to school for a culinary arts degree and become the head chef at a Tri-Cities winery.

Swaggart left the restaurant business to spend more time with family, but as she considered her future career options, the district recruited her to take over the foods program.

She brought the same passion for fresh ingredients and cooking fundamentals to her classes, and stu-

dents and staff took notice.

Swaggart assembled extracurricular teams that placed highly in state cooking competitions. This year, the top two finishers at the state competition were Pendleton students.

In 2016, Swaggart applied for a \$100,000 grant that required PHS to compete with other schools nationwide in an online poll. She helped assemble a successful grassroots campaign, winning the grant and using the proceeds to buy a food truck for the program.

See CULINARY/6A

