

Firefighters save Pendleton house from hot blaze, but family forced out

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

Elmer Emmons' nose helped save him and his family.

The Pendleton man, one daughter and two grandsons were at his home at 4023 N.E. Riverside Ave. when fire erupted a little before 11 a.m. Monday in the shop behind his house.

"I smelled it," Emmons said. "I was upstairs and smelled wood burning. I looked out and saw the flames."

Emmons said he rushed to shut off power to the shop, where he stored tools and equipment, including propane and acetylene tanks. He said the garage was stick built with cedar, and dry.

"It was like kindling," Emmons said. "It didn't take long."

His wife and one other daughter were not home, and he and the rest of the family got out unharmed. He also said he called 911.

Pendleton Fire Department interim Chief Shawn Penninger said crews arrived soon after getting that emergency report and found the garage "very well involved in fire."

Some of the tanks holding compressed gas exploded, he said, which made taking on the blaze difficult. And radiant heat alone started fire on the home, Penninger said, but firefighters controlled those flames in swift order and saved the structure. He estimated they were on the scene for about three hours.

The East Umatilla County Rural Fire Protection District, Umatilla Tribal Fire Department, and the Pilot Rock Rural Fire Protection District also responded, while police from Pendleton and the Tribes managed traffic and crowds.



A garage in the Riverside area of Pendleton burned to the ground Monday.

Contributed photos by Pendleton Fire Department

Emmons was at the home Tuesday morning and contacting his insurance agent. He said the house was uninhabitable, and the family was working on living arrangements.

Penninger said the state fire marshal is investigat-

ing Tuesday to look for the cause.

Emmons said the situation could have been much worse. They had planned on not being home. If they had left, he said, they would have lost the whole house.

BRIEFLY

Volunteers drive CareVan program

HERMISTON — People looking to give back to the community are invited to volunteer with the CareVan.

A medical transportation service operated through Good Shepherd Health Care System, the program is especially in need of volunteer drivers. Those who enjoy meeting new people and making a difference are encouraged to contact Cindy Schaan at 541-667-3690 or cschaan@gshealth.org.

Free class offers caregiver information

HERMISTON — People are invited to a free class that's designed to help anyone who cares for an aging Oregonian better understand the effects of Alzheimer's and similar diseases.

"The Basics: Memory Loss, Dementia and Alzheimer's & Effective Communication Strategies" is Wednesday, June 6 from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in Room M-01 at Good Shepherd Medical Center, 610 N.W. 11th St., Hermiston. It's appropriate for individuals who provide care for an aging family member or loved one, as well as those who work in professional caregiver settings, public safety or social work.

Offered through Oregon Care Partners, the class will focus on care for those with memory loss, dementia or Alzheimer's. For more information or to register, visit www.oregoncarepartners.com. For questions, contact 1-800-930-6851 or info@oregoncarepartners.com.

Art project makes fabric postcards

PENDLETON — People are invited to create a fabric collage postcard that is suitable for mailing or framing.

Participants can turn a sentimental greeting card into a long-lasting expression that is uniquely yours and meant exactly for the person intended. Colleen Blackwood will provide guidance for people's creativity during Say it Again, This Time with Feelings. The class is Thursday, June 7 from 6-8:30 p.m. at Pendleton Center for the Arts, 214 N. Main St. The cost is \$15. All materials will be provided.

For more information, contact Kaisa Hill at classes@pendletonarts.org, 541-278-9201 or visit www.pendletonarts.org.

Hermiston FFA cooks up Father's Day fundraiser

HERMISTON — Members of the Hermiston High School FFA program are raising money to go to the national competition.

One of the fundraising efforts offers barbecued beef tri-tip. Mel Keely and members of the Hermiston FFA Chapter will prepare the beef. People have the option of purchasing a cooked beef tri-tip roast or a fresh un-cooked roast. The cost is \$30 each.

People must pre-order by Friday, June 8. The meat will be prepared on Sunday, June 17 and available for pick-up at approximately 11:30 at Hermiston High School, 600 S. First St.

For more information, contact Brianna Smith at brianna.smith@hermistonssd.org or 541-667-6100.

ARLINGTON

Get some spring while you can

By TAMMY MALGESINI
East Oregonian

The Arlington Community Chamber of Commerce is celebrating the final weeks of spring with a family-friendly outdoor event.

Held in conjunction with Oregon's Free Fishing Weekend, the Fishing Derby and Spring Walapalooza is Saturday beginning with registration at 8 a.m. in the parking lot at Earl Snell Park, located at the base of Exit 137 off Interstate 84. Fishing is from 8 a.m. to noon, with weigh-ins the last two hours.

The entry fee for the fishing derby is \$3 and the first 50 registered participants will receive a goodie bag. Prizes for the biggest fish will be awarded in five age groups, including 4-and-under, ages 5-8, 9-12, 13-17 and adults. All children under the age of 12 must be accompanied by an adult. All Oregon Sport Fishing Regulations apply — although no fishing license is required during the state's designated free fishing

weekend. People are encouraged to stick around after the fishing derby as the Spring Walapalooza heats up in the park's gazebo. Winners of the fishing derby will be announced. In addition to food, entertainment is featured until 1:30 p.m.

The Arlington chamber is proud of its little slice of paradise on the Columbia River. The park — which was named in memory of Earl Snell, Oregon's 23rd governor — surrounds a sheltered lagoon with a sandy beach and swimming area.

Another upcoming event in Arlington is the A-Town Throwdown. It showcases people's talents with kiteboarding, windsurfing and stand up paddleboarding.

In its second year, the A-Town Throwdown is Saturday, June 16 from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the Port of Arlington. The event features competitions, vendors, exhibitors, food, a beer garden and live music. Also, Big Winds will provide equipment for people

Walapalooza
Fishing derby begins Saturday at 8 a.m. in Arlington's Snell Park.

who are interested in giving stand up paddleboards a try at Earl Snell Park.

The entry fee to compete is \$60 per event. The price includes race entry, a lunch ticket, two beer tickets, two nights of dry camping and a T-shirt (if registered by May 31). Also, there's no fee to enter the SUP Relay, which is open to all ages and abilities (free demo equipment is available). Pre-registration is required for all events by Wednesday, June 13 at www.eventbrite.com. There is no fee for spectators.

For more information about events and activities in Arlington, call 541-626-3426, visit www.visitarlingtonoregon.com or search Facebook.

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

Former Tonya's House director to change plea in theft case

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

Former Tonya's House director Shawn Elizabeth MacGregor has a hearing Thursday to change her plea to charges she stole thousands of dollars from the Pendleton nonprofit that helped teen girls.

MacGregor said her lawyer advised her not to comment on the case but she hopes a more balanced view of the situation will come out following the resolution.

Casey White-Zollman, former chair of the Tonya's House board of directors, said she, too, was looking forward to that courtroom resolution.

Tonya's House hired MacGregor in April 2016, and the Tonya's House board of directors in May 2017 closed the doors after 20 years of providing care and temporary shelter to teen girls in crisis. White-Zollman at the time said it looked like donations could not keep up with expenses and shutting down was the

only option. Pendleton police that September began investigating the closure of Tonya's House.

Pendleton Police Chief Stuart Roberts earlier this year said the case kicked off after MacGregor revealed the thefts to a friend. Police worked with the Oregon Department of Justice to obtain search warrants for fiscal information, he said, and found MacGregor made several transfers of funds from Tonya's House accounts to personal accounts.

The Umatilla County District Attorney's Office in February indicted MacGregor on one count of first-degree aggravated theft, seven counts of first-degree theft and one count of second-de-

gree theft for stealing more than \$10,000 from Tonya's House. The *East Oregonian* covered that in a Feb. 28 story.

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D 3:20* 9:20

DEADPOOL 2 (R)
4:10 6:50 9:30

LIFE OF THE PARTY (PG13)
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