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Blake Shelton, right, performs at the Pendleton Whisky Music Fest.

Staff photo by Jade McDowell

‘We speak music here’

More than 18,500 people packed the Round-Up for Saturday night show

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

As concertgoers waited anxiously for the gates of the Pendleton Round-Up Grounds to open Saturday afternoon, everyone was asking each other the same thing: Pitbull or Blake Shelton?

It was impossible to determine the exact split between the roughly 18,500 people in attendance, but it was clear that both artists at the 2018 Pendleton Whisky Music Fest had a lot of fans.

Shannon and Hannah Byerly of Helix thought the concert was a perfect mix of both.

“For me it was Pitbull, for her it was Blake Shelton,” Shannon said as they waited near the head of the line.

She said she thinks Pitbull is “pretty hot” and she loves his music.

Kayla Ramos, down from the Tri-Cities, said she was excited to see both.

“I thought it was a great combination — a little bit of Spanish, and Blake is a little bit of country, so it’s perfect,” she said.

The diverse lineup drew a diverse crowd of different ages and music tastes.

Oscar Romero was there to see Shelton because he loves the thought the country superstar puts into his lyrics, while Maria Diaz and a friend were sporting matching Mr. Worldwide T-shirts in the Party Pit because they love Pitbull’s energy and

Cops commandeer Mid-Co buses to keep concertgoers moving

Concert ‘fairly uneventful’ for emergency responders

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

The third Pendleton Whisky Music Fest saw a record crowd whoop it up this past weekend with few police and emergency problems.

Almost 19,000 crowded the Pendleton Round-Up Grounds for Saturday’s all-day event. Pendleton Police Chief Stuart Roberts said the organizers each year make modifications to enhance the festival but sometimes those changes produce unintended consequences.

Such was the case with bringing in metal detectors to enhance security. The scanners slowed down the long lines of

people getting in for the show. To help speed up the process, Roberts said, law enforcement went out and searched people who had been in line for hours.

Saturday’s temperatures were in the upper 90s in Pendleton, according to National Weather Service data, with nary a breeze and not a drop of precipitation. And of course, Roberts said, some folks already were imbibing and grew confrontational, “but for the most part, there were not a lot of issues.”

The “party pit,” where several thousand fest-goers drank and danced, probably produce the most complaints, Roberts said, such as “this guy pushed me, that guy elbowed me.” The people in the party pit know what they were getting into, he said, and with that many

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music.

Sharon Stewart of Vancouver, 70, said her kids didn’t believe her when she said she was going to a Pitbull concert. She was sitting in the stands with Liz Green, 66, of Kennewick. While their first goal was to see Shelton, Stewart said she saw Pitbull perform at some music awards on TV and enjoyed his upbeat music.

Green, when asked what she liked about

Shelton, laughingly said she probably shouldn’t go into detail when listing everything she liked about the country superstar.

“I shaved my legs for Blake Shelton today,” she said cheekily.

The party

Gates opened at 4 p.m. on Saturday, and by the time the sun started to dip below

See WHISKY/8A

Trump believes Putin, doubts U.S. intelligence

President says he doesn’t know why Russia would meddle with 2016 election; eliciting outcry in U.S. from all sides

Associated Press

HELSINKI (AP) — In an extraordinary embrace of a longtime U.S. enemy, President Donald Trump on Monday openly questioned his own intelligence agencies’ firm finding that Russia meddled in the 2016 U.S. election to his benefit, seeming to accept Russian President Vladimir Putin’s insistence that Moscow’s hands were clean.

The reaction back home was immediate and visceral, among fellow Republicans as well as usual Trump critics. “Shameful,” “disgraceful,” “weak,” were a few of the comments. Makes the U.S. “look like a pushover,” said GOP Sen. Bob Corker of Tennessee.

Trump’s meeting with Putin in Helsinki was his first time sharing the international stage with a man he has described as an important U.S. competitor — but whom he has also praised a strong, effective leader.

His remarks, siding with a foe on foreign soil over his own government, was a stark illustration of Trump’s willingness to upend decades of U.S. foreign policy and rattle Western allies in service of his political concerns. A wary and robust stance toward Russia has been a bedrock of his party’s world view. But Trump made clear he feels that any firm acknowledgement of Russia’s involvement would undermine the legitimacy of his election.

Standing alongside Putin, Trump steered clear of any confrontation with the Russian, going so far as to question American intelligence and last week’s federal indictments that accused 12 Russians of hacking into Democratic email accounts to hurt Hillary Clinton in 2016.

“I have great confidence in my intelligence people, but I will tell you that President Putin was extremely strong and powerful in his denial today.

“He just said it’s not Russia. I will say this: I don’t see any reason why it would be,” Trump said.

His skepticism drew a quick formal statement — almost a rebuttal — from Trump’s director of national Intelligence, Dan Coats.

“We have been clear in our assessments of Russian meddling in the 2016 election and their ongoing, pervasive efforts to undermine our democracy, and we will continue to provide unvarnished and objective intelligence in support of our national security,” Coats said.

Fellow GOP politicians have generally stuck with Trump during a year and a half of turmoil, but he was assailed as seldom before as he returned home Monday night from what he had hoped would be a proud summit with Putin.

Sen. John McCain of Arizona was most outspoken, declaring that Trump made a “conscious choice to defend a tyrant” and achieved “one of the most disgraceful performances by

See TRUMP/7A



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Several witnesses spotted unidentified aerial phenomenon in the skies Wednesday over Pendleton. One object, seen here enlarged, moves at a high speed east toward the Blue Mountains.

PENDLETON

Strange sighting overhead

Bag-like object hovers for hours, joined by another, then both disappear

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

Several Pendleton residents question what it was they saw in the skies over the town Wednesday morning for the better part of an hour.

Virgil Bates Jr. and Tonia Smith were part of the road construction crew at the intersection of Southwest Nye and Marshall avenues when around 9 a.m. they spotted a small white object floating hundreds of feet above the south area of Pendleton.

Smith said she thought it was a kite, and Bates speculated it was a plastic shopping bag. Bates said his curiosity grew when he looked back up minutes later and the thing still was there.

Bates used his smart phone to zoom in and take photos and video of the object.

“Check it out,” he recalled saying. “It’s not moving. It’s staying in one spot.”

Bates said the object did not behave the way a bag would in the wind. He said it was large enough to view from miles away and the underside was in shadow. Smith said she saw the object move a bit one way, then move the

See SIGHTING/8A

