

HERMISTON

Ellwood returns for homecoming festivities during cancer treatment

By **JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN**
East Oregonian



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Hermiston junior homecoming princess Jasmine Ellwood rides into Kennison Field in a Corvette during halftime of the Homecoming game on Friday in Hermiston. Ellwood has been out of school since April battling Ewing sarcoma, a type of bone cancer.

For the last six months, Jasmine Ellwood has faced some challenges bigger than term papers and state tests. The Hermiston High School junior has been out of school since April battling Ewing sarcoma, a type of bone cancer. As daily events like sporting events and dance practice were replaced by trips to Portland and chemotherapy, a group of her friends and classmates got together and nominated her for a high school tradition: the homecoming court. Ellwood, 16, was elected homecoming princess for the junior class, and was in Hermiston last week attending events, such as mud wars, the homecoming assembly Thursday and the football game Friday night.

Ellwood said she was pleasantly surprised by the nomination. Her sister, Alysha, started a social media campaign, which encouraged others to vote for Ellwood.

"I was thinking about everything she's been through, and how her life has changed," Alysha said. "I went on Twitter, and started posting about electing her. And it really took off."

Ellwood's mother, Cindy, said the family was grateful for the support they've received from the community. "I thought it was pretty special this happened," Cindy said. "Her whole world got turned upside down. To have this going on — it is a big deal. It lets her know she's still a part of the high school, the community. Just letting her know, we're still thinking about you, we love you."

Ellwood has continued to take classes online, but her schooling has been interrupted as she spends days at a time in Portland. Right now, her mother said, she is doing fairly well, and should

be finished with chemotherapy in December or January. But, with fluctuating blood cell counts making her susceptible to infection, she will likely not return to school full time for a while. Since her diagnosis, she and her family have spent most of their time in Portland, where Ellwood has received chemotherapy and radiation therapy at Doernbecher Children's Hospital. Over the course of 31 sessions of radiation treatment, she and her family had to stay in Portland at the Ronald McDonald House, a program that provides housing for families and children battling illnesses who have to travel out of town for care.

Ellwood said she has stayed positive, going to school events when she can. But she said what's helped her most has been the familiarity of coming back to Hermiston.

"I think the thing that's helped me the most is being able to be at home with my friends and family," she said. "I'm in the best mood because it feels normal again."

Umatilla County section missing from pamphlets

By **PHIL WRIGHT**
East Oregonian

Some Umatilla County voters received a state voters' pamphlet without the section for county elections. The county and the elections division of the Oregon Secretary of State are working on the problem.

"It's causing me some heartburn, as you can imagine," county elections manager Kim Lindell said.

The first person to report the problem to Lindell was Rick Pullen, a former county employee running for county commissioner. Lindell said she then reached out to others about the matter, and one county employee came in with a pamphlet lacking the local section. She and her boss, Dan Lonai, director of Administrative Services, checked bundles of the pamphlets and in each bundle found guides missing the section.

Lindell said the contractor the Oregon Secretary of State uses to print the pamphlets had "some kind of mess-up" and did not include the section in all Umatilla County editions of the guide for the November election. And the state is not willing to mail new pamphlets, she said, because the error was not county-wide.

"I have no way of knowing who got them and who didn't," she said.

Debra Royal, chief of staff for Secretary of State Dennis Richardson, said

the state contracts with a printing company to produce the pamphlets, and 19 counties have sections for the November general election. Some counties insert their sections in the pamphlets by hand, while others send it to the state for insertion at the printers. Royal said all the pamphlets for Umatilla County should have been the same and included in the section.

"It was a mistake," she said. "They're trying to figure out where the snafu went wrong in the chain."

Lindell said pamphlets sometimes lack specific candidates, and that's because someone did not file and pay to be in the pamphlet.

"But if that section is missing, that's a problem," she said.

The county on Friday notified news media about the oversight, and Lindell said the elections department is making the complete pamphlet available. Voters can pick one up at the Umatilla County Courthouse, 216 S.E. Fourth St., Pendleton, or call the department at 541-278-6254 and ask for one, which the county will send for free. And the pamphlets are available online: Go to www.co.umatilla.or.us and click on the link for the "Umatilla County Voter pamphlet."

Royal also said she was looking into whether candidates and others would receive refunds after paying to have their information in the pamphlets.

Watkins sells Columbia Court Club, opens new business

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
East Oregonian

Steve Watkins knows his new line of business is a little ironic.

Two years after he had to shut down the Columbia Court Club in Hermiston due to a fire, he has sold the building and started a new business inspecting and selling fire extinguishers.

Watkins didn't disclose the buyer of the club at 80903 S. Highway 395, but said in the near future they should be announcing plans to renovate and reopen it as a fitness center once again.

The Columbia Court Club served for 38 years as a workout center, gymnasium, indoor track and Hermiston's only indoor pool, until a fire broke out upstairs in the summer of 2016. The fire, thought to have been started by an electrical short in a power strip, didn't cause any injuries. But it charred the upper floor of the building and put holes in the ceiling that have since led to further water damage. Smoke, soot, fire-suppression chemicals and two years without heat have made the club's machines and pumps unusable, and the locker rooms had to be gutted.

Watkins said he spent two years and thousands of dollars in legal fees fighting with the insurance company. They have finally reached a

settlement, he said, but not one that would pay to rebuild everything the club had before, up to current building codes. And once the club opened it would take months of hard work to try and re-attract customers that have been "absorbed into the market" elsewhere.

"I did that once when I was 25 and that was fine, but I'm too old to take on that challenge again," he said. "I'm going to leave that to the younger generation."

Instead, Watkins and former Columbia Court Club

manager Mary Marsing have started Fire Pro, a locally owned and operated business that sells and services fire extinguishers. Businesses have requirements to have their extinguishers inspected by a certified professional yearly, and taken apart for a more thorough inspection every six years.

"I noticed most of the area is not serviced by anyone local," Watkins said.

He said they are finding "quite a bit of work" already. "It's been fun to get out in

the community and see people," Watkins said. "We used to see a lot of people through the club, and it's nice to see them again."

He said when he shows up at businesses they usually ask him about what happened with the fire at the club, and he often shares advice, business owner to business owner, about things he wished he had known before the fire.

"Looking back at my (insurance) policy, there are things I would do different," he said.

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This special section will print in the Hermiston Herald on Nov. 7, 2018 and in the East Oregonian on Nov. 10, 2018. There is **NO CHARGE** to be included. Bring us or send in photos of servicemen, servicewomen or veterans, along with the information in the form to the right, by **November 1, 2018**.

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