

PENDLETON

Arts center's new coordinator builds with community ties

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

Kate Brizendine is bringing her enthusiasm and connections to a key position at the Pendleton Center for the Arts.

Brizendine, 31, is the center's new coordinator of education and outreach. She took the job in late September. Her role is to make sure the center has a full schedule of classes and instructors for painting, knitting, ceramics and more. She also takes classes, including the recent "Power Tools Bootcamp For Women," where she and other women over the course of two hours learned to use a chop saw, jig saw and more to produce a wood project.

"We are going to do another one because it was such a hit," Brizendine said.

She grew up in northeast Portland and came to Pendleton seven years ago after meeting her future husband, Nick Brizendine, a Pendleton native. The couple have two daughters, ages 2 and 6. She worked as an advertising representative for about five years at the *East Oregonian* and left the job a couple of years ago and transitioned into individual care taking. She said that lasted until a pivotal conversation



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Kate Brizendine is the new coordinator of education and outreach at the Pendleton Center for the Arts.

with a client. "This just wasn't the place I could nourish my soul," she said.

Roberta Lavadour, executive director of the arts center, asked Brizendine to apply for the coordinator role. The two women met when Brizendine handled the arts center's advertising account so she knew its community work.

"How could I not rally behind that kind of message?" she said.

Even so, she said she felt

some trepidation because the center has plenty of moving pieces and she is still learning. Yet the early learning curve has been positive.

"It feels really good to wake up in the morning and go to work with an excited and open heart," she said.

Lavadour said Brizendine's relationships in the community are a boon for the center and as a mother of two young children she is connected to the activities that children enjoy. Brizendine encouraged locals

to check out the center's classes and activities.

"You can come and find something you can connect with in a deeper and more meaningful way," she said.

Brizendine also said she is open to suggestions.

"I want to hear about what we can do to make our program better than it already is," she said.

The Pendleton Center for the Arts is at 214 N. Main St. You also can learn more about the center online at pendletonarts.org.

EOCI superintendent on leave amid investigation

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

The superintendent of the state prison in Pendleton is on paid administrative leave and under investigation.

The Oregon Department of Corrections placed Brigitte Amsberry on leave in early September. She has been superintendent of Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution since July 1, 2017.

Jennifer Black, corrections spokesperson, said Amsberry is duty-stationed at home with pay and the subject of an internal human resources investigation, which is ongoing. Amsberry has a monthly salary of \$11,488.

Black said she could not say anything more about



Amsberry

the nature of the investigation.

Amsberry began her career in state corrections in 2000 as a nurse at EOIC. She worked her way up to correctional rehabilitation manager in 2006

and to assistant superintendent of correctional rehabilitation the next year, accord-

ing to information from the corrections department. She served as interim superintendent at EOIC in 2013, assistant superintendent in 2014, and assistant superintendent of security in July 2016. Later that year she took the helm at Two Rivers Correctional Institution, Umatilla.

Richard McGraw, the assistant superintendent of general services, is the prison's acting superintendent.

Hermiston surgeon Harrison shot in Kennewick

East Oregonian

An orthopedic surgeon from Good Shepherd Medical Center is recovering after he was shot twice on Saturday in Kennewick by his son.

According to the *Tri-City Herald*, Dr. Patrick Harrison was shot in the collarbone and stomach, and was taken to Trios Southridge Hospital

in Kennewick.

Harrison's son Hunter, 20, told police that he was defending his mother after a fight between his parents turned physical. According to the *Herald*, the younger Harrison called a neighbor and dialed 911 after firing the shots.



Harrison

Hunter Harrison was interviewed by the Benton County Prosecutor's Office but was not arrested.

Good Shepherd's Communications Director Nick Bejarano said in a prepared statement that the hospital encouraged Harrison's

patients to contact his office for information about how to continue their care plans.

"We are saddened by the unfortunate set of circumstances surrounding Dr. Harrison," Bejarano wrote. "Dr. Harrison is a highly-skilled orthopedic surgeon who has enhanced the orthopedics program by bringing new techniques and procedures to our community."

Hermiston council to hear update from Rep. Smith

East Oregonian

The Hermiston City Council will vote on a handful of land use decisions Monday.

The council will consider co-adoption of a Umatilla County rule change that will pave the way for the city's plan to build a water tower on the corner of Northeast 10th Street and East Puntin Center Road. The text amendment would place an exception for water towers in the "future urban" zone, which generally does not

allow lot sizes less than 10 acres. The city is negotiating purchase of 1.5 acres for the water tower.

Another amendment before the council Monday would allow for larger driveways. The current ordinance, adopted in 1963, sets residential driveways at 20 feet wide. But city planner Clint Spencer said in a memo that developers mostly build homes with three-car garages these days, and "almost every house constructed requires special approval from the city engi-

neer to deviate from the 20 foot width cap."

The proposed new ordinance would cap driveways at 36 feet.

The council will also consider annexation of a 0.22-acre "island" of county property off Theater Lane surrounded on all four sides by city boundar-

ies. The property owner has requested the annexation to use city sewer services.

Prior to the council's regular session at 7 p.m., they will hold a work session at 6 p.m. with state Rep. Greg Smith at city hall, 180 N.E. Second St. The full agenda packet can be found online at hermiston.or.us/meetings.

UMATILLA

Candidate forum focuses on city's improvement

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

Optimism was in the air on Thursday night as Umatilla residents packed into the Umatilla Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center to hear from candidates for the city council and mayor.

Candidates spoke of their love of Umatilla and their excitement for the city's progress, and audience members asking questions praised the quality of the school district and the city's growth. One woman said the city had never looked so good.

It was a markedly different vibe from four years ago, when residents were showing up to city council meetings to complain about empty buildings downtown, unkempt properties, panhandlers and a proliferation of businesses, such as strip clubs and smoke shops. They testified that they were embarrassed by the city's appearance, and one woman said Umatilla had turned into "a little Tijuana sideshow."

A lot has changed since then — something that incumbents have pointed out in their campaigning. The city has stepped up code enforcement and created a popular spring cleanup event. The chamber and the local museum have added new events to engage the community. Two major housing developments have come in. New businesses, such as Rae's Dayz Diner have opened, and Amazon data centers have provided money for new parks and recreation projects.

"There are a lot of moving parts to the city's success," Mayor Daren Dufloth said.

Dufloth was joined at the front of the room by challenger Mary Dedrick; city council incumbent Mark Keith and his opponent Corinne Funderburk; Leslie Smith, who is running for the seat Mel Ray has decided to leave; and Josy Chavez, who is running unopposed to replace Selene Torres-Medrano.

While incumbents ran on the city's successes, the newcomers also tended to keep it positive instead of attacking what the city has been doing. Funderburk, a language arts teacher at Umatilla High School, said she was thrilled to be raising her three teenage boys in Umatilla. Now that they are older and she has more flexibility, she

said, she wanted to get more involved with the community.

"I'm so proud of Umatilla and of living here," she said.

Funderburk is one of three candidates who work for the school district — Dedrick is a volunteer coordinator at McNary Heights Elementary School and Chavez is an administrative secretary for the district.

Questions for the candidates at Thursday night's forum ranged from what the role of the planning commission is to how the city should support small businesses. One recurring theme was how the city could encourage more citizen involvement, particularly with the Hispanic community.

Chavez said she believes having a bilingual councilor helps. She pointed to when she worked in the office at one of the schools, and her co-worker who didn't speak any Spanish said when Spanish-speaking parents walked in and saw that Chavez wasn't there they would leave.

Dedrick also pointed to her experience with the schools as a volunteer coordinator, saying in her experience it helps to recruit specific people and address whatever might hold them back from getting involved. She told the story of a parent who said she would love to help but she didn't think her English was good enough. Dedrick convinced her to try it out, saying she could leave any time she felt uncomfortable. The woman loved it so much she now works at the school.

Keith said he speaks "very good" Spanish and helped start the Mexican Independence Day celebration in Hermiston. Chavez asked Keith in Spanish if he knew when Mexican Independence Day was, to which he (correctly) answered in English that it was Sept. 16.

In their closing statements, candidates reiterated the positive things they saw in Umatilla and laid out how they believed they could help that growth and improvement continue. Smith, a retired nurse, said she had a love of Umatilla's people and plenty of time on her hands to dedicate to the city.

"I want to serve," she said. "I think I can do good things."

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VENOM (PG13)
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A STAR IS BORN (R)
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would like to thank everyone for the love and support shown to us during our loss. The family truly appreciates all the beautiful flowers, cards, food and memorial contributions made in memory of Carol.

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With sincere thanks,
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