

EAST OREGONIAN

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 26, 2018

143rd Year, No. 49

WINNER OF THE 2018 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

One dollar

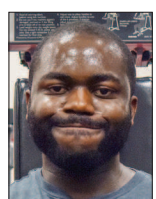
Our New Neighbors

NAVY VETERAN LANDS AT UAS TEST RANGE

Murray brings young family to Pendleton

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

Shawn Williams Murray hefts weights most Pendleton gym rats dream about. But his brains, not his



Murray

brawn, combined with a love of family to land him in the Round-Up City this fall so he could help Airbus subsidiary A³ keep flying. The 28-year-old former Navy flight mechanic said he had choices of where to work in the aerospace industry, and A³ provided what he sought.

"When I got here, I wanted to spend as much with my family as possible," Shawn said.

Shawn and his wife, Noel Murray, have a girl, 5, and a boy, 2. Shawn said his previous jobs in the aerospace industry meant working 70-80 hours a week, and his last job took him away from home about 90 nights a year. With A³, he spends most of the time in town and he clocks in at 40 hours a week.

He is a transplant from Delaware and adopted at 13. He said he planned to go to college but finances and family circumstances pushed him down another path. He joined the U.S. Navy in March 2009 and became a mechanic. The Navy stationed Shawn at its newest and largest master jet base, Naval Air Station Lemoore, where he worked on fighter jets, such as the F/A-18 Hornet.

After three years, he was ready to move on.

"I would have signed up again because I loved my job," he said, but the town of Lemoore was dismal. He described it as "the armpit of California."

Still, he met his wife there while in the Navy. Her family roots in the Golden State go back to the mid-19th century. He recalled going to a bar to celebrate a buddy's birthday, and he saw her, and

See Neighbor, Page A3



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

One-year-old Alanna Raph tackles a roll during BMCC's Christmas Eve dinner on Monday afternoon at the Pendleton Convention Center.



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Waiter Noah Espinoza, 8, hands a loaded plate to a diner at the Community Fellowship Dinner on Christmas Day at Hermiston High School.

SERVING YULETIDE CHEER

PENDLETON

BMCC students serve up some good cheer on Christmas Eve

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

Just minutes after the annual Blue Mountain Community College Christmas Eve dinner opened, a line of people snaked through the Pendleton Convention Center parking lot.

The yuletide dinner has proven popular enough to warrant a few changes in the annual tradition in recent years.

The meal moved from BMCC's Pendleton campus to the convention center in 2016, and this year, the college made the decision to move the start time up by two hours to accommodate the 70-80 volunteers who seat the guests, wait tables, cook the ham dinner, and staff the Santa Claus area, but would still like to have some time with

See BMCC, Page A6



Left: Micah Olivera delivers plates to diners during the BMCC Christmas Eve dinner on Monday afternoon at the Pendleton Convention Center. Right: Dallin Smith, 10, and his older brother bring leftovers to diners at the Community Fellowship Dinner on Christmas Day at Hermiston High School. A group of friends started offering the free holiday meal in the 1980s.

HERMISTON

Community Fellowship Dinner provides friendship, food

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

The coffee and conversation were flowing freely at Hermiston's Community Fellowship Dinner on Christmas Day.

The holiday meal, which has been an annual tradition since the 1980s, is free and open to anyone, for any reason. The widespread invitation draws an

eclectic crowd, from those who don't want to spend Christmas alone to extended families enjoying the chance to skip doing dishes and cooking.

Frances Howard said she came by herself to the dinner in the Hermiston High School commons, but was able to meet "a lot" of people there.

"I'm living in a camper

See Fellowship, Page A6



Staff photos by Kathy Aney

A white(ish) Christmas



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Snow dusts fields just west of Pendleton on Christmas morning. The white stuff quickly melted off as the temperature edged upwards.

Regift or refund? What to do with unwanted gifts

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

Everyone has had the experience at least once in their lives: They unwrap a gift with anticipation, only to feel a sense of disappointment.

The gift might have been given with good intentions, but it doesn't fit right. Or you already have one. Or it's just plain hideous.

What now?

Local thrift stores hope people donate their unwanted gifts.

Rocky Newton, manager of Pendleton's Salvation Army thrift store, said before Christmas that the

shop had already benefited from a bump in donated items.

"I do know a lot of people are cleaning out their closets and toy chests right now to make room," she said.

She expected that to continue after the holidays, in addition to people donating unwanted gifts rather than deal with the hassle of trying to return them. Newton said any unwanted gifts in good shape — from household goods to clothing — could be a happy find for someone on a budget, and the money

See Presents, Page A3



7 29467 10001 5