

New studio offers children’s art classes

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

A local artist is hoping to increase art opportunities for young people by opening an art studio in Stanfield.

Kim La Plant plans to teach art lessons to children and teens at Ozark Hippie Art & Creations, opening March 30 at 135 E. Coe Ave. Her own artwork will also be on sale at the studio to help support the venture.

La Plant plans to charge \$10 per child for most lessons, with some offered for free so that families of any income wouldn’t be left out. She said she hopes students will pick up some art skills, but also that they will be able to benefit from a creative outlet and increased self-expression and self-esteem.

“It will mostly be for the kids to have a soft place to land,” she said.

La Plant has been teaching classes at the Pendleton Center for the Arts and has worked with youth and art in other settings, including Head Start. The Hermiston Public Library featured her work — which often features colorful watercolor representations of nature — in December.

An art teacher made a significant impact on La Plant when she was growing up in the Ozarks. She said kids on the west side of Umatilla County have few opportunities for art classes outside of school, which is what inspired her to open Ozark Hippie Art & Creations.

Things have come together perfectly for her to open the studio, she said, from the affordable space to donations from businesses, such as Hermiston’s Details 2 Enjoy home decor store. One day she and her husband Brian were driving to



Staff photo by Jade McDowell

Ozark Hippie Art & Creations will open March 30 in Stanfield.

the Tri-Cities and she prayed to be able to find 40 chairs and three tables she could afford for the art classes.

“We turned the corner (at Goodwill) and they were literally just wheeling these out,” she said, gesturing to the blue plastic chairs lining the tables. “They had just been donated, and there were exactly 40.”

Art classes offered at Ozark Hippie Art & Creations will include various mediums, from acrylic paint to wood burning. Speciality classes will include mother-child classes, father-child classes and projects that pair children and senior citizens together. La Plant plans to firm up the class schedule soon, but expects to be open Wednesday through Saturday.

For more information, visit the Ozark Hippie Art & Creations Facebook page, email ozarkhippiecreations@gmail.com or call 541-656-6754.



Photo contributed by Kim La Plant

Kim La Plant works with children at Pendleton Center for the Arts.

Hermiston’s Bonifer excels at state chess tournament

Junior earned more points than any other Hermiston player in the past 20 years

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian

The game of chess is more than just moving pieces on the board. There is an art to the game, and more moves than off-season baseball.

Hermiston junior Isaac Bonifer has a handle on the nuances of the game, and that paid off last weekend at the 52nd Annual Chess for Success Oregon State Tournament at the Oregon Convention Center in Portland.

Bonifer won two games, lost two, and had another finish in a draw, recording 2½ points — more than any Hermiston player in the past 20 years — and finished tied for fifth in the field of 22 players.

Joshua Grabinsky won the state title, winning all five of his matches.

Had Bonifer had won his final game, he would have placed second.

“I played the other kid’s game and I shouldn’t have,” he said. “He caught me off guard. After a while I slowed down and he got mad. In the end he had more pieces than me.”

This past weekend was Bonifer’s second trip to the state tournament. Last year he won one of five games.

“I have only had one other kid (Oscar Gal-damaz) who had gone two



Staff photo by Annie Fowler
Isaac Bonifer tied for fifth place at a statewide chess tournament in Portland over the weekend.

years in a row,” Hermiston chess club advisor Delia Fields said. “Isaac has a chance to go three times.”

While Fields is the advisor, she admits she is not a chess master. She gets help from former Hermiston teacher Dan Jamison, who comes in and challenges the players.

“Dan helps the kids think through their game,” Fields said. “Isaac has beaten Dan a couple of time this year.”

Fields said the kids need the extra push.

“They see a high level of competition over there,” she said of the state tournament. “Some of those kids have personal chess coaches.”

Bonifer said he started playing chess in the seventh grade with his father Luis.

“He used to be able to beat me,” said Bonifer, who also plays on the school’s lacrosse team. “That has changed. I beat him all the time now.”

BRIEFLY

Stanfield swaps land for future development

STANFIELD — Stanfield plans to swap land-use designations to access 110 acres near the Pilot Travel Center for development. The Umatilla County Board of Commissioners will consider the proposal for co-adoption during a public hearing Wednesday starting at 1:30 p.m. at the county courthouse, Pendleton.

Commissioner and board chair Bill Elfering said Stanfield has land near its western end inside the urban growth boundary that it does not plan to develop and would like to swap that with the 110 acres zoned for exclusive farm use near the Pilot Travel Center.

“It’s a virtual swap, use for use and land for land,” Elfering said, and the

county planning commission already approved the move. Now the deal heads to the board of commissioners for final consideration.

Stanfield police investigating death of 6-year-old boy

A 6-year-old boy died Saturday in Stanfield of natural causes, according to police.

The boy, who was a kin-

dergartener at Stanfield Elementary School, died in his sleep.

Police responded to a call for an unresponsive child around noon on Saturday, and Umatilla County Fire District paramedics tried lifesaving efforts on him, but they were unsuccessful.

Stanfield Police Chief Bryon Zumwalt said he couldn’t say whether the boy had previous health issues, but that’s why it was being ruled natural causes.

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