

Graduation: Quilt pieces together memories of basketball career

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the most fun she ever had with a quilt.

"I loved this project from start to finish," she said.

The two women joked that they loved the quilt so much they weren't sure if they were actually going to let Smith have it.

Lockwood doesn't do the stitching for other peoples' quilts anymore, other than for the Quilts of Valor projects for veterans. But she relented on helping her good friend, and was glad she did it.

"I told Erin, even if he didn't appreciate it now, as an adult he will look back and cherish it, and he will know what love his grandma put into it," she said.

In the center of the quilt is a square of jersey with Smith's high school number — 21 — in purple and gold. It's the inverse of his dad Shane Smith's, who wore the number 12 when he played for the Hermiston Bulldogs.

The squares tell the story of Smith's basketball career, but they also tell the story of a close-knit team. The six graduating seniors on Hermiston High School's roster grew up playing together, most of them since third grade. The team finished their senior season with a 15-8 record.



Contributed photo by Craig Lockwood
Shawn Lockwood, left, and Erin Chowning work on the quilt that they created for Chowning's grandson Cole Smith.

Now, Smith said, they will go their separate ways after graduation on June 6. Smith is still weighing his options — he got accepted to Eastern Oregon University, but is also considering an electrician apprenticeship

with his dad.

Wherever he goes next, he'll have his quilt to remember his basketball days, and the friends he made there.

"I enjoyed spending time with my teammates, how close we got," he said.

Water: Neighborhood group trying to stop another McKay flood



Staff photo by Kathy Aney, File
A man walks his dog at Community Park next to a swollen McKay Creek on April 13.

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McKay Creek residents are now banding together to demand preventative measures against future floods and a seat at the table among the vast network of government bureaucracies that govern the creek.

On a bright Tuesday afternoon, Mulvihill, who works as the superintendent of the InterMountain Education Service District, invited Umatilla County Commissioner John Shafer, Kirk Avenue neighbor Bill Wohlford, and Todd Armstrong, a friend of Wohlford's and a concerned citizen with creek restoration experience, to his home.

Without the threat of encroaching waters, Mulvihill's green backyard soundtracked by the creek below looked and sounded idyllic.

But Mulvihill beckoned his guests to the back of his property, which extends across the creek toward Community Park.

Mulvihill gathered the group on an elevated gravel bar that didn't used to exist. The force of the flood eroded the banks, creating gravel bars up and down the creek and sheer cliffs along Community Park.

The concrete walls that used to help channel the creek now sit helplessly in the newly formed creek bed.

Unlike the flood in 1991, no one was forced from their homes in a mandatory evacuation.

But Mulvihill and Wohlford say the damage may be longer lasting because of how long the flooding remained.

Further erosion along the banks of McKay Creek could further threaten Community Park and the residents who call the neighborhood home.

Mulvihill said McKay Creek homeowners have long been excluded from the con-

versations over McKay Creek and the dam and reservoir that feed it.

But he was encouraged by a recent meeting he attended, which featured representatives from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, the Umatilla County Board of Commissioners, the city of Pendleton, and the offices of Sens. Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley and Rep. Greg Walden.

Out of that meeting, Mulvihill said the group is working toward four goals: update the instruments that measure intake at McKay Reservoir, restore the banks along McKay Creek, establish new diversions for reservoir overflow, and perform a new capacity study at the dam.

The dam is supposed to hold more than 65,000 acre feet, mostly for irrigation and steelhead habitat, but the McKay residential group suspects sediment build-up has reduced how much it can hold.

Even before 1991, McKay Creek has a long history of flooding. In 1958, the *East Oregonian* reported that the governor was calling in the National Guard to "tame the rampaging waters."

In 1906, 23 years before the McKay Dam finished construction, one resident reported that the waters in McKay Creek were the highest she had ever seen as the waterways across the area flooded town.

Mulvihill said he's heard the argument that flooding is to be expected when he and his neighbors live in the floodplain, and it makes his blood boil.

Unlike the Umatilla River, Mulvihill said McKay Creek has an element of human control because of the dam.

And Mulvihill and his cohort argue that McKay Creek serves a wider community purpose.

Although he would advise against it this year because of

the sharp debris that washed through the creek, Armstrong, the concerned citizen, said the creek is usually a hot tubing spot for local children.

And Community Park is already a popular gathering and recreational spot where Pendleton Parks and Recreation holds its annual Movies in the Park series.

"It's like a water Round-Up," he said.

With the continuing onset of climate change increasing the likelihood of future flooding, Mulvihill said the only way they'll be able to prevent future flooding is through community support.

"Water is unforgiving," he said.

The neighborhood's effort has already found allies among local government officials.

Pendleton Mayor John Turner was at the stakeholder meeting, and he said it's within the city's best interest to continue to participate in the group.

Shafer, the county commissioner, said he viewed the county as a facilitator between residents and the several layers of government bureaucracy the community will need to navigate to reach its goals.

It won't be a quick task. Mulvihill bemoaned the "acronym soup" of government agencies that have a stake in the creek, and Wohlford said he's already been in contact with five agencies to get a permit to work on a gravel bar near his property — and he still hasn't gotten a clear answer as to who will issue it.

Mulvihill said the problems facing McKay Creek likely won't be solved in 2019 or 2020.

But he already feels like there's more momentum to fix them than the last flood 18 years ago.



Colin E. Braley
Joe Armison looks over damage to his home after a tornado struck the outskirts of Eudora, Kan., Tuesday.

Tornadoes rip through Kansas City outskirts, warnings in NYC

By **JULIE WRIGHT, ANGIE WANG AND JOHN MINCHILLO**
Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Missouri — A vicious storm tore through the western outskirts of Kansas City on Tuesday, spawning one or more tornadoes that downed trees and power lines, damaged homes and injured at least 11 people in the latest barrage of severe weather that saw tornado warnings as far north as New York City.

Parts of Pennsylvania and New Jersey also were under tornado warnings hours after a swarm of tightly packed twisters swept through Indiana and Ohio overnight, smashing homes, blowing out windows and ending the school year early for some students because of damage to buildings. One person was killed and at least 130 were injured.

Those storms were among 55 twisters that forecasters said may have touched down Monday across eight states stretching eastward from Idaho and Colorado.

The past couple of weeks have seen unusually high tornado activity in the U.S., with no immediate end to the pattern in sight.

Tuesday offered no respite, as a large and dangerous tornado touched down on the western edge of Kansas City, Kansas, late in the day, the National Weather Service office reported.

Kansas City International Airport temporarily suspended flights and forced travelers and employees to take shelter in parking garage tunnels. A powerful twister also touched down in the nearby township of Pleasant Grove, Kansas, seriously damaging homes.

But the severe weather wasn't limited to the Midwest. Tornadoes were confirmed in eastern Pennsylvania and the National Weather Service issued a tornado warning for parts of New York City and northern New Jersey.

The winds peeled away roofs — leaving homes looking like giant doll-houses — knocked houses off their foundations, toppled trees, brought down power lines and churned up so much debris that it was visible on radar. Highway crews had to use snowplows to clear an Ohio interstate.

Some of the heaviest damage was reported just outside Dayton, Ohio. "I just got down on all fours and covered my head

with my hands," said Francis Dutmers, who with his wife headed for the basement of their home in Vandalia, about 10 miles outside Dayton, when the storm hit with a "very loud roar" Monday night. The winds blew out windows around his house, filled rooms with debris and took down most of his trees.

In Celina, Ohio, 82-year-old Melvin Dale Hanna was killed when a parked car was blown into his house, Mayor Jeffrey Hazel said Tuesday.

"There's areas that truly look like a war zone," he said.

Of the injured, more than two dozen were admitted to hospitals.

Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine declared a state of emergency in three hard-hit counties, allowing the state to suspend normal purchasing procedures and quickly provide supplies like water and generators.

The National Weather Service's Storm Prediction Center showed that suspected tornadoes touched down in several states including Indiana, Colorado, Ohio, Iowa, Nebraska and Illinois.

Monday marked the record-tying 11th straight day with at least eight tornadoes in the U.S., said Patrick Marsh, a Storm Prediction Center meteorologist. The last such stretch was in 1980.

A tornado with winds up to 140 mph struck Monday near Trotwood, Ohio, a community of about 24,500 people 8 miles outside Dayton. Several apartment buildings were damaged or destroyed, including one complex where the entire roof was torn away, and at least three dozen people were treated for cuts, bumps and bruises.

"If I didn't move quick enough, what could have happened?" said Erica Bohannon of Trotwood, who hid in a closet with her son and their dog. She emerged to find herself looking at the sky. The roof was gone.

Just before midnight, about 40 minutes after that tornado cut through, the National Weather Service tweeted that another one was crossing its path.

Only a few minor injuries were reported in Dayton. Fire Chief Jeffrey Payne called that "pretty miraculous," attributing it to people heeding early warnings. Sirens went off ahead of the storm.

Some of the people treated at the area's Kettering Health Network hospi-

tals were hurt during storm clean-up itself, while others may have waited before seeking treatment from storm injuries, said spokeswoman Elizabeth Long.

A boil-water advisory was issued after the city's pumping stations lost power. Dayton Power & Light said more than 50,000 customers remained without electricity and restoration efforts could take days.

A high school gym in Dayton was designated an emergency shelter until authorities realized it was unusable. Vandalia's school system tweeted that it is ending the year two days early because of building damage. In nearby hard-hit Brookville, where the storm tore off the school's roof, classes were canceled.

In Indiana, a twister touched down Monday evening in Pendleton, about 35 miles from Indianapolis. At least 75 homes were damaged there and in nearby Huntsville, said Madison County Emergency Management spokesman Todd Harmeison. No serious injuries were reported.

Pendleton residents were urged to stay in their homes Tuesday morning because of downed power lines and other dangers.

"People are getting antsy. I know they want to get outdoors, and I know they want to see what's going on in the neighborhood," Harmeison said. But he added: "We still have hazards out there."

Outbreaks of 50 or more tornadoes are not uncommon, having happened 63 times in U.S. history, with three instances of more than 100 twisters, Marsh said. But Monday's swarm was unusual because it happened over a particularly wide geographic area and came amid an especially active stretch, he said.

As for why it's happening, Marsh said high pressure over the Southeast and an unusually cold trough over the Rockies are forcing warm, moist air into the central U.S., triggering repeated severe thunderstorms and tornadoes. And neither system is showing signs of moving, he said.

Scientists say climate change is responsible for more intense and more frequent extreme weather such as storms, droughts, floods and fires, but without extensive study they cannot directly link a single weather event to the changing climate.