



HUNDREDS FLEE FIRE IN CALIFORNIA WINE COUNTRY
NATION/WORLD, A7



PREP VOLLEYBALL: DAWGS TURN LIGHTS OUT ON SUNS
SPORTS, B1

EAST OREGONIAN

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2019

143rd Year, No. 266

WINNER OF THE 2019 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

\$1.50




Your Weekend



- **Blue Mountain Wildlife open house**, Pendleton
- **Fall Festival**, Heppner
- **Food Truck & Auction Extravaganza**, Hermiston

FOR TIMES AND LOCATIONS CHECK COMING EVENTS, A6

Weekend Weather

FRI	SAT	SUN
 69/38	 52/29	 51/28

Dems see golden opportunity

After years of being held by the GOP, Dems see opportunity in Salem Senate seat

By **JAKE THOMAS**
Oregon Capital Bureau

SALEM — After Deb Patterson lost her race against long-time state Sen. Jackie Winters, R-Salem, in 2018, she immediately began preparing for a rematch in four years.



Patterson

But Patterson, a Democrat, is getting a second chance to run for the Senate two years early.



Boles

Winters died in May, setting in motion an election in November 2020 to fill her seat.

Republicans and Democrats have taken an interest in Senate District 10, a crescent-shaped district that includes west and much of south Salem.

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PARKWAY ASSAULT



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

William Wehrli suffered wounds on his hand, leg and head while being assaulted on Tuesday on the Pendleton River Parkway. Two teenage boys arrested by Pendleton police shortly after the attack have been charged with third-degree assault.

River levee attack leaves Pendleton man shaken

By **PHIL WRIGHT**
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — William Wehrli set out Tuesday afternoon for his regular workout along the Pendleton River Parkway. Instead of ending with a good sweat, he called 911 to report he was the victim of an assault.

Pendleton police arrested the suspects — a pair of teenage boys.

Wehrli, 30, stands well above 6 feet tall and works as a security officer at Wildhorse Resort & Casino near Pendleton. Over the course of the year, he said, he adopted a healthier lifestyle and has lost 56 pounds.

“Every day after I get off from work, my dog and I go for a jog on the levee,” he said.

Tuesday was no different. He and Rossy, his chocolate Labrador retriever, started jogging around 3 p.m. at Trailhead Park on the west end of the parkway that runs along the Umatilla River levee. The routine takes them east to Wash-



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

William Wehrli suffered this injury to his hand during the assault on the Pendleton River Parkway on Tuesday.

“I DIDN’T KNOW IF HE WAS YELLING AT ME OR SOMEONE ELSE.”

William Wehrli

ington Elementary School, 1205 S.E. Byers Ave., before heading back.

Some teens were hanging out at Bedford Bridge at Southwest 18th Street, he said, and one of them started yelling profanities and even racist slurs. Wehrli is white.

“I didn’t know if he was yelling at me or someone else,” Wehrli said, so he kept going.

The teen followed and harassed Wehrli as he passed

Roy Raley Park.

“I ignored him,” he said.

Wehrli has autism and is a local autism advocate. He recalled dealing with his share of bullies in high school in Ione, but the only time he encountered similar harassment on the parkway was in March when another group of younger people threatened him while jogging. That time, he said, no one

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UMATILLA COUNTY

Working to educate voters

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — Ballots are already in the hands of voters, but groups with measures on the ballot are still making the rounds to explain the consequences of a yes or no vote.

Umatilla County Commissioner Bill Elfering explained Wednesday night the two county charter measures for the audience at an election forum hosted by the Umatilla County Republican Party.

Elfering said there had been some confusion about Measure 30-133, titled “Changes Law Enforcement Department to Sheriff’s Office in County Charter.” The amendment to the charter would not affect the function of the sheriff’s office, but merely changes the words “Law Enforcement Department” to “Sheriff’s Office” in the charter to make it clear which law enforcement agency is being referred to.

“There is absolutely zero change in anything about who the sheriff is or what he or she does, this is simply a name change,” Elfering said.

The other county measure would change the way elections for county commissioner are held.

Under the current system, every race for a seat on the board of commissioners includes a primary in May and a general election in November. That creates situations, such as the 2018 race, when John Shafer and incumbent Larry Givens faced off. Shafer won more than 50% of the vote in May, but was not technically elected until November, when his name again appeared on the ballot — this time as the only candidate listed. He took office at the beginning of 2019, nearly eight months after voters first chose him.

If voters approve Measure 30-132, when only one or two candidates file for a seat on the board of commissioners, no primary will be held in May. Instead, the candidate or candidates who filed by the March filing deadline will appear on the ballot in November, saving the

See *Voter*, Page A8

Local school libraries see fewer librarians

Licensed librarians in Oregon and Umatilla County are becoming a rare breed, but that could change under Student Success Act

By **JESSICA POLLARD**
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — It is the fall quarter at Blue Mountain Community College and English instructor Ki Russell is about to learn how much her students know about finding accurate information online for research papers.

“I can never assume anything,” she said. “Some students are comfortable with reading and citing, but not with locating sources. In some cases, there is absolute panic.”

She thinks it could have to do with K-12 libraries.

In Umatilla County, according to the Oregon Department of Education, there are three full-time licensed school librarians at two districts.

The rest of the districts keep their libraries open with the help of media assistants — who don’t have a Masters of Library Science — or with part-time licensed librarians.

BMCC Director of Library &

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Staff photo by Ben Lonergan

A group of third-graders at Highland Hills Elementary School in Hermiston dig into a set of newly donated books in the school library on Thursday morning.

