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Honoring his heritage

Weston-McEwen student Aiden Wolf writes about growing out his hair to honor his native culture

By JEREMY BURNHAM
Walla Walla Union-Bulletin

ATHENA — Weston-McEwen High School junior Aiden Wolf was all set to represent Oregon as a member of the Rural Youth Assembly during a weeklong meeting in McAllen, Texas, this school year.

The gathering of students from across the U.S., of course, fell victim to the COVID-19 pandemic and was canceled.

Aiden, a member of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, was hoping to share his culture with the other students of the assembly. He also wanted to learn from them.

"I thought it was a great advantage for me to learn more about other rural teenagers and their cultures," he said. "And how they are similar and different from my own."

With the meeting canceled, Aiden still wanted to share his story. So he wrote an essay to be published on the Rural Assembly's website. The essay details how Aiden grew out his hair to honor his heritage.

"I wanted people to hear my point of view," he said. "How I live, and how Native Americans, at least in my tribe, view having long hair."

The essay also explains how growing out his hair wasn't exactly his idea. In fact, as the following excerpt suggests, he was initially very hesitant to do it.

"I did not do this willingly, but it felt like my mother would hate me if I did not," Aiden wrote in his opening paragraph. "My father showed his support and also grew his hair out. It was a nice gesture, but he wasn't at school or stuck in my head. There were no cultural aspects I reflected on when I started. When it grew out, it annoyed me a lot and made me feel more uncomfortable than I already felt."

Aiden began growing his hair in 2016. Since then, it has become something he has embraced and wants to share. He said in his essay that it has changed how he reacts to some situations.

"The combination of that setting in our schools, having long hair, knowing where I come from and who all of my ancestors are has helped me grow," Aiden wrote.

He said as he gets older, his appreciation of his own culture grows. He wants people to see that in his essay.

"It's showing respect to everyone. It's showing respect to our land," Aiden said. "Taking care of our land. Making sure the salmon still come up stream. Making sure the roots still grow in the spring, and that the deer population isn't overpopulated and that we still have wolves. It's just balance. It's what we believe in, and I really like that."

Athena-Weston School District Superintendent Laure Quaresma said she appreciated how thoughtful Aiden was in his approach to his essay.

"He's a leader in our school," Quaresma

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Robert McLean/Contributed Photo

Aiden Wolf, a junior at Weston-McEwen High School and member of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, is finding ways to embrace and share his cultural heritage.



Greg Lehman/Walla Walla Union-Bulletin

Aiden Wolf at Weston-McEwen High School in Athena on Friday, April 16, 2021.

LOCAL ELECTIONS 2021

Voters have options in May election

Port of Morrow Commission sees contested races

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

BOARDMAN — Voters in the May 18 election will have plenty of choices in the race for Port of Morrow commissioners.

Two of the seats up for election feature a three-way race, while a third seat has one candidate. Those elected will take their seats on July 1 for a four-year term.

Rick Stokoe

For Commissioner Position 1, current chair Rick Stokoe is running for another term.

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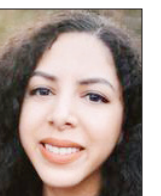
HERMISTON SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATES MAKE THEIR CASE

As decision-making about students returning to the classroom during the pandemic has elevated interest in school boards across Oregon, the race for Hermiston's Board of Education is no exception. **Page A3**

State law could force candidate to make decision

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Starting on April 28, local voters will choose who will represent Position 7 on the Pendleton School Board. If voters select candidate Briana Spencer for the seat, then she'll have to make a choice of her own.



Spencer

A member-elect of the Nixyaawii Community School Board, a state law wouldn't allow Spencer to serve on both the charter school's board and the Pendleton School Board simultaneously.

Spencer said she didn't know she wouldn't be able to hold both seats until after the March 18 deadline to file for the Pendleton seats.

When contemplating a run for school board, she consulted with Debbie McBee, the school board chair, who told her she didn't think it would be a problem if she sought election to both boards, but she would need to follow up.

In Eastern Oregon, it's not uncommon for people to hold multiple elected offices. For instance, Morrow County Sheriff Ken Matlack

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Hundreds gather for Stanfield street fair

Area classic car owners, enthusiasts flock to Stanfield for 'Show and Shine'

By BRYCE DOLE
East Oregonian

STANFIELD — Jeff Bemrose still owns the car he built with his dad back in high school. Over their four years working together on the 1941 Ford Coupe, he found his passion for the classics. Today, however, he's still fixing the mistakes he made as a teenager.

"I'm still paying for my father's sins, I guess," said Bemrose, a member of the Hermiston Classic Car Club.

Standing beside rows of 87 clas-



Bryce Dole/East Oregonian

Vendors line the roadway at a "Show and Shine" event in downtown Stanfield on Saturday, April 17, 2021.

sic cars at the Stanfield Street Fair on Saturday, April 17, Bemrose echoed a sentiment held among many locals.

"People have been itching to get out," he said.

Recently, Cecili Longhorn, direc-

tor of the Stanfield Public Library, contacted Bemrose and the car club to help put on the first-of-its-kind street fair, which saw hundreds of people

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