

COMMUNITY BRIEFING



Contributed Photo

Pendleton High School senior MacElla Kirsch won a competition for her paper collage art piece entitled "North American Bobcat in the Snow"

PHS senior wins congressional art contest

PENDLETON — A piece of art made by a Pendleton High School student will soon hang in the halls of Congress.

On Friday, May 14, the Pendleton School District announced that senior MacElla Kirsch had won the 2021 Congressional Art Competition for Oregon's 2nd Congressional District. Kirsch's winning piece is a paper collage entitled "North American Bobcat in the Snow."

According to a press release, Kirsch said she's always preferred depicting animals in her artwork and her winning piece was modeled after a picture from a game camera.

"Nothing is more enjoyable than to form a mental image in one's own mind, and then replicate it onto a physical canvas," she said in the press release.

Kirsch has already won accolades for her past artwork, winning Best in Show for Student Work at the Open Regional Exhibit at the Pendleton Center for the Arts for a different piece, "Sumatran Tiger in the Jungle."

In a statement, Pendleton High School art teacher Alice Thomas praised Kirsch for the preparation and meticulousness she puts into her work.

"MacElla is original in her concepts, and comes up with unique ideas," Thomas said. "She trusts her instincts, is extremely reflective and can talk and write about her art with ease and intelligence."

The Congressional Art Competition is a national contest meant to showcase art from high school students from each of the country's 435 congressional districts. Kirsch will soon get the chance to travel to Washington, D.C., and view her art at the U.S. Capitol, where it will be displayed for the next year.

After high school, Kirsch plans to attend Blue Mountain Community College before eventually transferring to a four-year university.

Milton-Freewater native earns Weber State honors

OGDEN, Utah — Weber State University awarded Sydney Dibble of Milton-Freewater the honor of High Academic Excellence for the spring 2021 semester. Dibble is studying health sciences in the Dumke College of Health Professions.

More than 4,300 students, representing 28% of Weber State undergraduates, received the honor of Academic Excellence in the spring, signifying they maintained a GPA of at least 3.5. Of those 4,300, approximately 1,300 students earned the distinction of High Academic Excellence

for maintaining a 4.0 GPA, representing 8% of the student body.

Get soaked at the M-F Splash Pad

MILTON-FREEWATER — A summer of fun is ready to splash its way into Milton-Freewater as the Splash Pad is set for a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

The water feature, which is located at Freewater Park, will open starting Wednesday, May 26, with the formal grand opening at 2 p.m. at the park, 722 N. Main St., Milton-Freewater.

The Milton-Freewater Rotary Club expressed thanks to its members, the community and all those that made donations. That includes the Milton-Freewater Area Foundation, the Ford Family Foundation, Eurus, Wildhorse Foundation, the city of Milton-Freewater, Don Jackson Excavating, Monahan, Grove & Tucker, the family of Thelma Garton, Munselle Rhodes Funeral Home, Walla Walla Electric, Carter Plumbing, Earl Brown & Sons, Central Washington Asphalt, Gordon Electric, Rep. Greg Smith, Northwest Steel, Walla Walla Nursery, David and Bonnie Shannon, Leslie and Leonard Brown, Dan and Kathy Lonai, and Bill Albee. Their contributions helped in making the project a reality, said Molly Hasenbank in a press release.

For more information, call 541-938-5531 or visit www.mfcity.com.

First Draft poet relates to audience members

PENDLETON — Poet Jennifer Perrine is surprised at how often she hears audience members say, "I had an experience like that, and I always thought I was the only one."

Perrine is featured during the upcoming First Draft Writers' Series. The event is Thursday, May 20, at 7 p.m. on the Zoom platform. The link is available via www.pendletonarts.org/first-draft or by emailing director@pendletonarts.org.

Perrine is the author of four books of poetry. Her poems often address the intersections between lived experience and systems of power, using personal stories to illuminate and disrupt dominant narratives about gender, race, sexuality, disability, religion, capitalism, anthropocentrism and American exceptionalism.

After Perrine's presentation, local writers, both professional and amateur, are invited to read 3-5 minutes from their own original work during an open mic.

In its eighth year, the First Draft Writers' Series features notable authors from the Pacific Northwest. For more information, visit www.pendletonarts.org or call 541-310-7413.

—EO Media Group

Yellowhawk begins vaccinating teens

Approximately 60 teens sign up for vaccination clinic

By BEN LONERGAN
East Oregonian

MISSION — Harley Gone rolled up his sleeve and closed his eyes as pharmacist Angie Dearing gently slid a needle into his left arm and administered his first dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine at Yellowhawk Tribal Health Center on Saturday, May 15.

"It wasn't too bad," the 12-year-old said after reopening his eyes.

Gone was the last member of his family to be vaccinated; his father, Julian Gone Jr., and his father's girlfriend had received their shots earlier and were anxiously awaiting the opportunity for one to be available to Harley.

"There's only three of us in our family and while my girlfriend and I have been vaccinated for a while, he was the only one that didn't," said Julian Gone Jr. "I think he's kind of glad too. He didn't seem displeased and he was all game for getting the shot."

Julian Gone Jr. added that his family has been pretty careful about COVID-19 and Harley has limited his activities to school and hanging out with his brother when he visits.

"It's great to get to hear them laugh," said Julian. "He's really cautious about COVID."

Despite loosening restrictions, the Gone family has pretty much kept to themselves, Julian Gone said, adding he thinks they will be more comfortable once everyone is vaccinated.

"We're kind of thinking, 'I'll relax when everyone is vaccinated,'" he said, adding he was considered high risk.

When asked why he wanted to get the vaccine, Harley said he wanted to get it to keep his family safe, a trend that Yellowhawk's acting mental health manager and lead mental health school-based clinician, Cindy Cecil, said is common among teenagers.

"I think that with what



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

Harley Gone, 12, closes his eyes as he receives his first dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine from pharmacist Angie Dearing during a vaccination clinic for teenagers at Yellowhawk Tribal Health Center in Mission on Saturday, May 15, 2021.



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

Anson Dressler, 14, shows off his Band-Aid after receiving his first shot of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine at Yellowhawk Tribal Health Center in Mission on Saturday, May 15, 2021.

I've seen in the schools most of the kids are like, 'You know what, this is something that I'm not necessarily doing for me — because I have a strong immune system — this is something I'm doing for my family, for my elders,'" she said.

Cecil went on to explain that she's seen a mix of interest in the vaccine in children, even in her own kids. She said many kids have parents who have been vaccinated and are awaiting the opportunity themselves, while others are anxious.

"I think this has been something that kiddos have been waiting for," she said. "Just like with any population some kids are anxious, some kids aren't — some are

excited, some aren't."

Dr. James Winde, a family medicine doctor at Yellowhawk, added that those who came in for their vaccine seemed excited about the opportunity and came ready with lots of questions.

"The kids are kind of excited," he said. "I think this age group has suffered probably, emotionally, a lot more than the other groups."

Winde said getting vaccines to kids would help aid the emotional toll of the pandemic and credited the quick response time from the CTUIR with helping to get a vaccination event set up for teenagers less than a week after the vaccine was approved for use in children

ages 12 and up.

The weekend clinic was open to anyone ages 12 or older who is a member of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation or works for a CTUIR entity. Yellowhawk Tribal Health Center Human Resources Director Aaron Hines said roughly 60 people signed up for the clinic in advance.

For the Dressler family, 14-year-old Anson Dressler's vaccination marked one step closer to the family being fully vaccinated, with only Dressler's younger brother still intelligible for the vaccine. While Dressler was excited to receive his vaccination, he said he was a bit nervous going into it.

"It feels pretty good," he said. "I thought it was going to hurt worse than it did, but it was good."

For Dressler's mother, Dusty Dressler, the vaccine is an opportunity to breathe a sigh of relief to know one more member of her family is vaccinated. Dusty Dressler, who works as a dietician at Yellowhawk, said she got her son signed up as soon as Yellowhawk announced availability.

"We feel like it's important for the community," she said. "His dad and I both work in health care, so we feel it's important for our family and for the community."

Inland Musicians tune up for weekend performances

By TAMMY MALGESINI
East Oregonian

UMATILLA COUNTY — It's been more than a year since the Inland Northwest Musicians have presented a concert. And R. Lee Friese, music director/conductor, is looking forward to the opportunity to perform.

"What we do with presenting music is it enhances and enriches people's lives ... something we can all use right now," he said. "By the same token, we want to follow the guidelines."

The Inland Northwest String Orchestra, which includes 18 musicians, has been tuning up its instruments for a pair of concerts this weekend. The ensemble will present "Spring String Orchestra" on Saturday, May 22, at the Stanfield Baptist Church, 310 E. Wheeler Ave., and on Sunday, May 23, at the Pendleton Seventh-day Adventist Church, 1401 S.W. Goodwin Place. Both concerts begin at 4 p.m. There is no admission charge, but donations are gladly accepted.

Friese said one of the organization's ensembles was preparing for a May 2020 performance when Gov. Kate Brown's stay home executive order was issued — forcing musicians to put away their instruments and rest their voices.

As the 2020 holiday season was approaching, the group's prospects were raised with the possibility of finally presenting a concert. However, their hopes were dashed when an increase in COVID-19 cases resulted in a "two-week freeze," which was immediately followed



Photo contributed by Lukes Photos

Under the direction of R. Lee Friese, the Inland Northwest Musicians String Orchestra will present a pair of concerts on Saturday, May 22, and Sunday, May 23, in Hermiston and Pendleton.

by restrictions on indoor gatherings continuing into the new year.

"We had four rehearsals, and then the county was declared 'extreme risk' so we were shut down," Friese said. "So, here we are again."

During the weekend performances, Friese said the musicians will be wearing masks. In addition, audience members are asked to observe safety protocols, including wearing masks. The sanctuaries at both venues, Friese said, allow for adequate spacing for social distancing with those living outside people's immediate households.

The program includes "Suite for Strings" by John

Rutter, which features a collection of four folk songs: "A-roving," "I Have a Bonnet Trimmed with Blue," "O Waly Waly" and "Dashing Away with the Smoothing Iron." Other pieces include "Brook Green Suite" by Gustav Holst, "Bases Loaded" by Carrie Lane Gruselle, "Blue-Fire Fiddler" by Soon Hee Newbold, "Shenandoah" arranged by Erik Morales, "Humoresque" by Antonin Dvorak, and "Folk Tune and Fiddle Dance" by Percy E. Fletcher.

"Our last live performance was in February 2020, so this is a very exciting and difficult reentry into the live performance

world amid a pandemic," said Karen Baxter, program manager.

Friese said while some of the organization's membership maintained contact throughout the past year, many typically only connect as a concert nears. The board of directors, he said, sent periodic emails to provide updates for the musicians.

The nonprofit organization also was busy with fundraising efforts. In addition to applying for grants, Friese said they were able to access some programs designed to help organizations impacted by the global pandemic.

Baxter said they focused on diversifying their fundraising efforts. They utilized the creativity of members and donations from others to serve as vendors at area bazaars, including one held outdoors this past winter when the mercury dipped down to 25 degrees.

Friese said the public can provide financial support in several ways, including "attending a fundraising event or coming to a concert and sharing in the spirit of event and if they choose to make a donation, they can do that."

Founded in 1999, Inland Northwest Musicians features several ensembles, including a full symphony orchestra, a chorale and a youth/preparatory orchestra. A classical music organization, they travel throughout the region to provide free music to rural audiences.

For more information, contact 541-289-4696, inwm@machmedia.net or visit www.inlandnorthwestmusicians.com or www.facebook.com/InlandNorthwestMusicians.

VISIT US
ON THE
WEB

EastOregonian.com

